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# SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER

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# SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER

*by*  
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## NOTE

THIS book is an attempt, in not too serious a vein, to set the British Army before the general reader and to gather up for the benefit of the soldier many of the traditions which have either not been committed to writing, or are spread throughout whole libraries of books.

The writer has for many years been struck by the haziness, not only of the civilian, but of the soldier, of all ranks, on the origin, growth and general history of the British Army, and by the invariable, if somewhat surprised, interest shown by all when a few of our military glories are brought to their notice.

“ To set the cause above renown,  
    To love the game beyond the prize,  
To honour, while you strike him down,  
    The foe that comes with fearless eyes;  
To count the life of battle good,  
    And dear the land that gave you birth,  
And dearer yet the brotherhood  
    That binds the brave of all the earth.”

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE LURE OF THE ARMY

OLYMPIA, London's largest hall, packed from tan to girders with an audience of folk who flatter themselves that they are perfectly sophisticated—Rushmoor Arena, whose tens of thousands thank the darkness that their neighbours cannot see the trickling tears of pride—a knot of passers-by watching two sentries changed at Whitehall. Isn't it odd, in the world's least military nation?

We abhor soldiering. What should a nation of shopkeepers want with military discipline? Ask the men of 1914-18. The air was full of their complaints when they shouldered the pack. They were as good soldiers in their grousing as in their fighting. Yet, even while they demanded to know the use of 'all this drill' they were straining every muscle that their battalion should be smarter on parade than its neighbour.

They had little time to learn more of the regiment they belonged to than the scrap of brass they wore in their caps. Yet the one great occasion in their humdrum civil lives is the one day every year when they climb, a little more stiffly each time, into the train that shall bear

them off to their Regimental Dinner. There they will meet their fellow-grouzers—the officers who gave them ‘C.B.’ comrades from the ranks, and even the grim Sergeant-major himself—not so terrible out of barracks—bonded together in that brotherhood which exists in no other profession on earth.

No profession, at any time or in any country, has made such fanatics of its followers as that of arms. Yet no class of men, traditionally, can be found to protest so much. It is not peculiar to the British service. Napoleon called his veterans, the men of Egypt and Marengo, his ‘vieux grognards’—old grouzers. It is a pose, adopted by the grouzers themselves to cover that deep-seated vein of sentiment which they fear to expose to the common gaze.

A headmaster of one of our great schools has said that Peace is depicted as “a rather insipid female in a nightgown, with a dove perched on one wrist and a wreath of rather faded laurels in her hand.” She is the ‘penny plain’ of our existence. And man, the ordinary man, bored with his office or his machine, the smug face of the house in which he lives and the dull faces he meets at his club or institute, dives down in his pocket and looks, half-guiltily, for the ‘tuppence-coloured.’

No sane man, as we so often proclaim, wants war. Tens of thousands remember its horrors. The scream of the shells, the fountains of stinking

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mud, the staring eyes and frayed flesh—all of these are very squalid things. They are war. And yet the tramp of feet through a Wiltshire village, the rhythm of drums in Olympia's vault, the flash of light on scarlet and gold—these remind us that it is a very great thing to be an Englishman. It is no disgrace to own an Empire, nor crime to fight the King's enemies. The Colours, crusted thick with the victories of our regiments, are the glory of every Briton with red blood in his veins.

We have, it has been said, no military caste in these Islands. Yet, apart from the war-time soldiers, the Army is deeply rooted in our national being. Rich paintings gleaming from walls that modern complications still leave ancestral, cheap photographs staring stark from ugly cottage walls, carry on the undying tradition.

It is all a mystery. Why should rich men give up their leisure, or middle-class homes stint that their sons should tramp the Empire? How explain the urge that drives to march in the ranks artisans, clerks, lads from good homes and bad, all grades, to the pert but deadly serious sparrow from the slum alley? And it is as much a *faux pas* to ask any of these why he enlisted as the same question is said to be in the Foreign Legion of France.

There is a history even in the recruiting of our Army. If it follows any laws at all they are of the vaguest. Novelists may write of the man



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crossed in love, the fighter of a too successful duel or the sprig of nobility cut off with a shilling and 'going for a soldier.' It may be, and most probably is, that the normal recruit joins from the urge of some vague inheritance passed on from generations who lived with swords at their sides or pikes in their hands. The question is not linked, apparently, with industrial problems. For when the great depression was deepest, recruiting was at a lower ebb than for years. Even then it was to be doubted whether recruits from unemployment were in the majority.

Our Army has been raised by a number of methods, good and bad. Some of the old recruiting posters, if they were not written by men with their tongues well in their cheeks, were the most ingenuous efforts. Were the lads of Yorkshire in 1800, for example, sufficiently erudite to read, or simple-hearted enough to swallow, the proclamation that any of them "desirous of making a Figure in life, and wishing to quit a dull laborious Retirement in the Country, has now an opportunity of entering at once into that glorious state of Ease and Independence which he cannot fail to enjoy in the King's Dragoon Guards?"

Did the "superior comforts and advantages of a Dragoon" drive "all young men who have their own interests at heart" to apply to "Serjeant Tribbles at the Angel Inn, Honiton"?

From the personal appeal to the national.

Another poster informed all of Sleaford who could read that there were wanted a "few generous Britons, desirous of aiding the Patriotic Inhabitants of Spain and Portugal" under that "distinguished Officer, the Conqueror of the East, Sir Arthur Wellesley." Such language, added to a bounty of Sixteen Guineas, was calculated to form a queue outside the quarters of Captain Simcocks or Serjeant Frost, eager to take service in "The Old and Bold, or Fighting, Flaming, often Tried but never Failing 5th or Northumberland Grenadier Regiment."

Fascinating? Yes, but so it is to-day, in such a place as the Central London Recruiting Dépôt. The posters are still flaming with the glories of the Regiments. You may stand and moralise, if that is your fancy. Watch the drafts go out—soldiers of an hour, each under its sergeant, fighting-cock turned brood-hen. There they go. Field-Marshal's baton, lance-corporal's stripes, glowing fame or hard-working oblivion, its 'all in the lucky-bag.'

You don't wish to moralise? Then merely be proud. These are your warriors. If you are an old soldier you will be forgiven for muttering "Things aren't what they used to be." True, but then they never were. There has been such decadence from Creçy on, that either we must be miserable pigmies or the men of the long-bow were the true sons of Anak.

For good or bad, for better or for worse—

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and you may be pretty sure it will be for good and for better—there they go. Rifleman, guardsman, gunner, or just plain private, they march out to the heat of their own day with the motto echoing even above the grouching, “It’s all in the day’s work.”

Have you heard the story of that motto? It tells of a young colonel who had led his first command on his first campaign. As he rode down his sadly thinned lines he came upon six-foot-three of human wreckage. A man lay dying. A French sabre had slashed his head, there was the tear of a bayonet in his breast, a bullet-hole was letting the life from his lungs.

Entirely ignorant of all save his duty, twenty years of faithful dog-like service had brought him from a scrawled ink-cross on an enlistment form to death on this patch of Flanders. Yet as he died he looked up with a twisted grin at his colonel and croaked, “It’s all right, sir. It’s all in the day’s work.”

The colonel was Arthur Wellesley, the soldier Private Thomas Atkins, grenadier of the Thirty-third. And, on a summer day fifty years later, the Duke of Wellington scrawled the name of Atkins which was to serve as a specimen on the new set of soldiers’ documents that had been sent him for approval.

History book—yes. But not the history of ‘movements’ or ‘causes,’ though even such teach lessons not to be explained elsewhere.

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But ours is a history of men, men great and small, good and bad—but very human, building up their monuments of fame, shining out from the past for our enlightenment. It may help in the darkness if we look back along the corridors and catch the ruddy glow of the torches as they bob gaily in our wake.

There is inspiration for all, for the civilian whose feet are caught by the tapping drum, for the man who marches in or in front of the ranks. Turn back a few pages, hum a bar or two of a fighting song. Read, if you will, the tale of a scrap of brass, the way of a battle-field joke, the lettered message of a flaunting banner—something about a soldier, and the Army that is his heritage.

The tradition of the old Army is stronger than ever to-day. It goes steadily on its way, a column of sturdy regiments, little understood even where most admired. Each enshrines a history of hard work, in five continents and over seven seas. Every day, almost, in some barracks or camp, some little-known battle is being celebrated, some honour, faded almost to invisibility save in a regiment's living soul, is being re-burnished that the Army may remember and march on.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW THE ARMY GREW

NEVER was an Army built up in such a haphazard fashion as ours. Its growth may be regarded as the result of a series of accidents. Most of the regiments came into being on a more or less temporary footing. As a working basis it may be assumed that every declaration of war was the signal for the raising of new regiments, while every signature of peace gave occasion for wholesale reductions or disbandments. Our regiments of to-day are the flotsam and jetsam of three centuries of war.

At no time was the danger of the policy more amply illustrated than when Britain, full of faith, as ever, in her own destiny, declared war on the new-born menace of the French Revolution in 1793. Literally the only troops available to be sent on active service were the Foot Guards. A Guards Brigade of three battalions was actually sent to open the traditional Flanders campaign. They crossed the North Sea in, for want of adequate transports, such empty colliers as the Port of London could produce.

They were followed, after a short interval, by

a Brigade of the Line, of which Abercrombie, its general, found but one battalion he dare risk in line of battle. It was the proverbial 'Corporal's Guard,' and not for eight years was the Army to be in a state to deliver anything like a worthy blow.

"For all practical purposes," one writer has said, "the British Army had almost ceased to exist; the idealogues of Parliament worshipped the maxim that an armed, disciplined body was in essence dangerous to liberty: and, rating as they did the precedents of constitutional history higher than the evidence of their own senses, they overlooked the fact that liberty could be as readily threatened from without as within, and against this danger, which they had not the wisdom to foresee, they had not only made no adequate preparation, but had rendered it impossible that such preparation should be made."

The words might have been applied equally well to the situation at a dozen crises in our national story.

The Civil War, culminating on the Whitehall scaffold of 1649, was fought, among other reasons, against the establishment of a Standing Army. The battle won, England found herself delivered up to a tyranny beside which that that had been destroyed was a pale shadow. Revolution is very apt to substitute King Stork for King Log. Divided among its jack-booted

major-generals, the country groaned under the administration of martial law for a decade.

London of the Restoration quailed under the frowns of Monk's veterans drawn up on Blackheath, and looked askance at the gay horse and foot of the Guard that surrounded Charles II. The feelings of the capital were reflected in Parliament, and total disbandment of the forces was ordered. Charles smiled his most cynical smile, and obtained the concession that his Guards should remain until the last.

It was left to one Venner, a cooper, to save the Army. This worthy was the leader of a band of fanatics who had vowed never to sheathe their swords till "the kings of the Earth should be bound in chains and their nobles with links of iron." They rose in force on January 6th, 1661, and the combined efforts of the shadowy Civil power, together with the remnants of the military, were hard put to it to restore order.

The King was nothing if not an opportunist. By his side stood his brother James, Duke of York, as admirable a soldier as he was a deplorable diplomat. Lord Gerard was ordered to reassemble the King's Troop of Life Guards, royalist gentlemen who had come in with the King. Commissions were given for the re-establishment of the 1st Foot Guards, who, raised in 1656, had also come over from Holland with Charles.

The Earl of Oxford was entrusted with the

formation, on the nucleus of disbanded Cromwellian Ironsides, of the great Regiment which is to-day the Royal Horse Guards. The Duke of York's Life Guards came from Dunkirk. The remaining regular body, the Lord General's Life Guard and Regiment of Foot, were, on February 20th, 1661, disbanded on Tower Hill, to take up arms immediately as the Duke of Albemarle's Troop of Life Guards and the Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards. North of the Tweed the present Scots Guards, together with a Scots Troop of Life Guards, were already in existence. The British Army was born.

Here, however, Parliamentary sanction drew the line, leaving a fortunate loophole in the fact that it had always been considered necessary to keep small establishments, generally in the shape of independent companies, in the greater fortresses. Often little more than cadres, or 'care and maintenance' detachments, these were to play their part, and Charles was able to disguise as 'garrisons' troops that could not be classified as 'guards.'

Very unsuccessful as bride, Catherine of Braganza, however, brought as part of her dowry, Bombay and Tangier. The former city was handed over to the East India Company. Tangier, fortified and held by a royal garrison, formed a training-ground for the infant army, a seventeenth-century Aldershot, with live shot and unbuttoned foils. Detachments of the



Guards won their first battle honours, John Churchill smelt his first powder, and three regiments crept by stealth into the Army List. The 1st Royal Dragoons, and the 2nd of Foot, then Kirke's Tangier Regiment, were the normal garrison of the place. A third, our present King's Own, was raised as Trelawney's for Tangier, but, owing to the evacuation of the fortress in 1684, never saw service there.

For many years, centuries even, English, Scots and Irish had sought under foreign flags the military career which was denied them under their own. Swords were never without purchasers on the Continent of Europe. As a consequence of Cromwell's triumph the mercenaries included, in the mid-seventeenth century, many valuable royalist blades. There were, moreover, at the time of the Restoration, two distinct bodies of British subjects in foreign service.

The French kings had always kept a place near their thrones for the strong arms of Scotland. There had been a Garde Écossaise since 882, which even professed, half-laughing, to claim descent from the Roman Legions. Scots had also fought for James I's daughter in Bohemia, and developed later into the thirteen regiments of Sweden's famous 'Green or Scots Brigade.' On the death of Gustavus Adolphus in 1632 the remnants of the old Brigade, headed by one piper and ninety-six drummers, made their way, somewhat noisily it is to be feared, to

France. A former officer of the Brigade, Sir John Hepburn, had been commissioned by Louis XIII and warranted by Charles I to raise a 'Regiment d'Hebron' in Scotland for the French service, and in this most of the veterans were enrolled. This was the regiment that was begged back by Charles II in 1661. After making sure that the King was safe on his throne the Scots returned to France for a while. The regiment eventually entered the British service in 1678, and gained its first battle honour also at Tangier. Then known as 'Dumbarton's,' it has in 1933, as the Royal Scots, celebrated its tercentenary.

Scots and Cockneys form no inconsiderable part of our Army. The other regiment in foreign service had been well and truly born within sound of Bow Bells. In the year 1572 Queen Elizabeth reviewed at Tilbury the Trained Bands of London. Hundreds of these City soldiers were shipped overseas to fight for Protestant Holland, under Sir Thomas Morgan. They starved in British pay, but evidently found Dutch service to their liking. At all events the English regiment was maintained by the States for nearly a century. The Dutch War of 1665 raised complications. The Englishmen refused to swear allegiance when it became a question of fighting their own kinsmen, and were expelled from the States. Home they came, a regiment still, and entered their own Army as the Holland Buffs.

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Charles was progressing. At the head of a State that acknowledged the existence of no standing army, he was yet the proud possessor of Life, Horse and Foot Guards, two regiments of Dragoons—the Greys were raised in 1681—and four regiments of the Line. He had furthermore contrived to get England's very first Secretary at War killed in action, and naval action at that. Considerable bodies of troops not on the establishment were keeping their blades bright in foreign service.

James his brother was military minded, if a little apt to turn his horse's tail in the field. It is surprising to find so eminent a critic as the Duke of Wellington informing Sir Walter Scott that "the most distinct writer on military affairs he had ever read was James II."

To James's care, indeed, the Army owes a considerable debt. It is to be doubted what kind of a debt the average soldier would consider it, did he realise that this unhappy monarch instituted autumn manœuvres. James's annual camp on Hounslow Heath served to please taxpaying sight-seers, exercise and train the troops while gratifying their King, and—or at any rate so he hoped—to overawe the Metropolis.

James, in the Monmouth Rising of 1685, found early excuse for the embodiment of additional troops. The regiments of infantry numbered 5th to 15th were thus raised, mainly, as was the custom of the day, by semi-private

enterprise under Royal Warrant. The present Devonshire Regiment, for example, was recruited by the loyal gentlemen of Somerset, Devon and Dorset. One regiment, the 7th Royal Fusiliers, was built up—as the Ordnance Regiment—on the two companies that had been the garrison of the Tower. Six out of seven regiments of Dragoon Guards were raised at the same time, with the 3rd and 4th Hussars.

There was also, and had been for some time, an entirely separate army maintained in Ireland. This Irish Army is important. Actually this was a Catholic Army, dispersed at the end of the war which established the Prince of Orange. The principle of the separate establishment was, however, to become one of the expedients for keeping the Army alive. Down almost to the end of the eighteenth century it was customary to keep a permanent force of some 12,000 men available across St. George's Channel.

These, when the Stuarts were gone, were ordinary regiments of the British Line, relieved, in the case of the Foot, in the ordinary course of trooping, but not featuring in the Army Estimates at all. Indeed, by some inscrutable juggling, troops transferred to the Irish Establishment were paid at a lower rate than those in England. The four junior regiments of Horse were kept in Ireland so long that they became known as the 'Irish Horse.'

Monmouth, a light, fickle Protestant breeze,

was easily overcome. William of Orange, landing in Torbay at the end of 1688, was the very tempest itself. James rushed troops down from the North and in from Ireland. Many new regiments sprang into being. Most of these were subsequently disbanded, but they left in the Army List the present Bedfordshire and Leicestershire Regiments, and the Lancashire Fusiliers. The new regiments of Horse, after a careful weeding out of the strong Catholic and ultra-Jacobite elements, were banded with William's own 'Cavendish' Regiment, which was to become the 7th Dragoon Guards.

The Army, enervated by the disaffection of the officers, did little to save the Catholic King. Some few regiments stood firm. The Life Guards escorted him to the last, while the Coldstream, under the aged Earl of Craven, were only prevented from defending Whitehall by the direct order of the King himself. His weak voice complained, "Never any prince took more care of his sea and land men than I have done, and been so ill repaid by them." Almost his last act as a monarch was to disband the Army. About half the personnel rejoined when recalled by William, but the loss in *matériel* was considerable. There was an ugly incident when the Royal Scots, marched to the East Coast, refused to embark for Holland, but the Revolution, on the whole, testified by its quietness the lack of personal appeal made by James II.

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Many of his co-religionists went to Ireland to continue the fight, many took their swords to the Continent and revived the old trade of the mercenaries. A large detachment of James's Irish Guards was actually incorporated in the Prussian Guard, a corps recruited all over Europe. James's negotiations with Louis XIV for support in Ireland provided for the formation of the famous Irish Brigade, which fought under the Lily Banner, until it gave way to the Tricolour.

Two regiments commemorate to-day the fight which kept Ireland under the English Crown. Protestants of Ulster flocked to William's standard and defended against all comers the cities of Inniskilling and Londonderry. The protectors of the former were later collected into the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons—now represented in the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards—and the 27th Inniskilling Fusiliers.

William III, in a strong position from the start, with country and Parliament thoroughly alarmed, made the most of his time. The Army grew and flourished. His astute mind saw in Marlborough, unstable though he was in the political cause, his own successor as a general. His appointment by William as Captain-General was a legacy to Queen Anne, who herself strengthened the position of England's greatest general. The campaigns of the Duke consolidated the reputation of the British soldier. Among his many claims to our gratitude it is

rarely remembered that, his active career finished, he was responsible, as Master-General of the Ordnance, for the first definite establishment of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

One more form of service, in Queen Anne's and later reigns, served to keep in existence regiments that might otherwise have perished. However averse public or parliamentary opinion was to the establishment of a standing army, national pride and mercantile enterprise combined to insist on the upkeep of an adequate Navy. As in the days of the great Elizabethans, the trades of sailing and fighting the ships were kept more or less distinct.

During the reign of Charles II the Royal Marines came into being as the Lord Admiral's Regiment. They were insufficient to provide fighting men for the whole fleet and suffered many vicissitudes. Ordinary marching regiments were commonly carried off for naval service. Thus, in the Second Dutch War of 1672, the Duke of York's flagship carried the King's Company of the 1st Guards, "with bag and baggage, drums beating, colours flying, matches lighted, bullet in the mouth."

A dozen regiments saw naval service in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I, and two regiments were raised expressly for the Fleet. The 4th Foot were actually known for a time as 'The Queen's Marines.' The regiments bearing on their colours the honour 'Gibraltar 1704-5'

gained it as marines. They are the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards, the King's Own, Somerset, E. Lancs., E. Surrey, D.C.L.I. and the Royal Sussex. Ten marine regiments were raised in 1739-40, to be disbanded in 1744. They were formed on regular Army drafts. The present Royal Marines were constituted in 1755, but the custom of using land troops did not entirely cease until after the Napoleonic wars.

George I was used to soldiers and their ways, and gave further stability to the Army of Britain. The '15 rebellion saw more stout regiments on the list. They were, in the Cavalry, the 9th and 12th Lancers and the 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th Hussars, all then known as Dragoons. These Dragoon regiments were, in theory at all events, to be regarded as mounted infantry rather than as infantry. In practice military vanity was responsible for their gradual forgetfulness of the fact that their horses were intended as a means of transport only. The practice received wider application in the French service. It is interesting to recall that the Grande Armée of Napoleon included a whole division of unhappy cavalry soldiers, who trudged over Europe fighting with musket and bayonet, to be absorbed into mounted Dragoon regiments when they were in need of reinforcements. One French writer attributes the low esteem in which, for a time, the French Dragoons were held, to the fact that the men, being jacks of two trades, were masters of neither.



The era of the first three Georges is a sorry tale of alternate raisings and disbandments as occasion arose. One very good result remains of all this shuffling. Although it is clear that during the eighteenth century the Army was on more than one occasion a distinct political issue, it emerged definitely as a 'Royal' Army, lifted as such out of the ordinary arena of party politics. The Georges, although it has often been the fashion to over-lard their sound qualities with cheap sneers, were very real figures on the national stage. They stood solidly behind the Army in its perilous adventure at home and watched with keen pride its campaigning abroad.

One of the most important innovations in the British Army of Hanoverian days was the raising of Highland regiments. It is generally stated that the underlying idea was to break up the power of the Jacobite clans. It was, however, in 1725, ten years after the first and twenty years before the second great attempt of the Jacobites, that the four independent companies were raised which, in 1739, became the regular regiment of Royal Highlanders, or Black Watch. The Highland battalions were raised on the feudal principle. The 93rd Sutherland Regiment, for example, raised in 1799 on the nucleus of the Sutherland Fencibles, marched into Fort George by Parish groups, having been enlisted, in good Highland fashion, with snuff mull and whisky flask.

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Some of our regiments had strange beginnings. The 41st, now 1st Bn. the Welch Regt., was originally one of the Invalid Corps which often formed the only sorry reserve for the defence of Britain. These invalids were pensioners. Men of the old Army enlisted normally for life and were only admitted to pension when completely disabled or actually incapacitated from old age.

Yet two more regiments we owe to the old system of 'garrisons' permanently attached to fortified places. In 1717 the four companies each of the garrisons of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland came together as the 40th Foot, now 1st Bn. Prince of Wales's Volunteers. Independent companies from Port Royal, Carolina, the Bahamas and Bermuda, together with six more drafted from Gibraltar regiments to Jamaica, became, in 1743, the 49th (Royal Berkshire).

No regiment had a more illustrious beginning than the 15th Hussars. The Seven Years' War saw Britain without a definite organisation of Light Cavalry, although some regiments had, in 1756, acquired each a light troop. In 1759, Brigadier-General Elliott, later of Gibraltar fame, and formerly of the Infantry, Engineers and Horse Grenadiers, raised the 15th as Elliott's Light Dragoons, our very first Light Cavalry Corps. Within a year the regiment had won immortal fame at Emsdorff, where it took prisoner five complete battalions and nine cannon.

The 17th Lancers may be termed a memorial

regiment. General John Hale it was who brought home to England the news of the capture of Quebec and the death in victory of General Wolfe. As his reward he was commissioned to raise the 17th Light Dragoons. A recruit of the regiment explained it in a recent examination paper. "The King gave General Hale a railway warrant and told him to raise a regiment of dragons."

The French wars, from seeing our Army at its lowest ebb, lifted it to an unprecedented size and glory. In efficiency there had certainly been nothing like it since the days of Corporal John, nor was to be again until those seven incomparable Divisions sailed in 1914.

Yet to raise such an army was one of the most difficult tasks ever tackled by our military authorities. It was impossible for any man to be worse off than the British soldier of the pre-revolutionary period. Consequently recruits were practically not to be found.

The private soldier's pay was that of Charles II's day, and wholly insufficient for his needs, especially in view of the excessive stoppages to which it was subjected. It is literally true that the man in the ranks had the choice, very often, between desertion and starvation. In Ireland during the 'seventeen-eighties' deserters made up one-sixth of the establishment. Indeed, dépôts were formed for the reception of appre-

hended deserters at Cork and Dublin. In these places they were tried, sentenced to perpetual service abroad, and shipped off in batches, generally to the 60th Royal American Regiment.

The 60th, still with us as the King's Royal Rifle Corps, had been raised in 1775 for colonial service. Its ranks were, to a large extent, filled by foreigners and deserters. The former were purchased in batches from their German princelings. Yet "nothing," says the historian of the Army, "is more remarkable than the splendid record of this regiment in the field, at a time when few soldiers entered it untainted by crime."

Desertion worked in a vicious circle. Every regiment was responsible for the retrieving of its own deserters, as it was responsible for the raising of its own recruits. A battalion in the South to whom the apprehension of a deserter in the North was notified, would thereupon send an escort to fetch him in, both forward and return journeys being made on foot. During the long march the men's clothing and equipment would be worn out. This they were required to replace, mainly at their own expense. Afraid to return to a life where their debts would make it impossible for them to obtain even the common necessities of life, escort and prisoner frequently deserted together.

Nor were subaltern officers in much better case. They, too, were subject to endless de-

ductions from their pay. In 1786 the colonels of the cavalry regiments in Ireland presented a memorial that the whole pay of subalterns was barely sufficient to maintain their grooms and horses.

Pitt the younger, often looked upon as a great War Minister, turned an almost deaf ear to remonstrance. Blind to the teachings and warnings of history, he did indeed dole out some small concessions in 1792, under which it was made possible for the private soldier to draw, in hard cash, a whole eighteen shillings, every *quarter*. It was not until 1797, when mutiny was imminent, that the pay was increased almost threefold.

Many were the expedients resorted to, to raise recruits in the first years of the counter-revolutionary wars. Vagabonds were delivered over by obliging magistrates glad to be rid of them. Half-drunken yokels were hustled off from their farms, and there were even men whose profession it was to swear that unfortunates had 'taken the shilling.' One battalion required for Abercrombie's Egyptian Expedition of 1801 was filled by opening the gates of Gloucester Gaol. A great number of men were obtained from the Militia, which was mustered at the outbreak of the war.

This old constitutional force was raised by a limited form of conscription for home service only. Its members were persuaded to volunteer for transfer to regular units by the offer of a

considerable bounty or appeals to their patriotism and thirst for glory. Here again each regiment was left to its own devices. Wondering Militia-men were treated to the not very edifying spectacle of officers of half-a-dozen corps strutting up and down their line in full regimentals, each descanting on the merits of his own corps.

There was a large response. One old military writer has described the scenes on the roads leading to one of the largest camps in Kent. Parties of drunken Militia-men rolled grandly in hired carriages to camp, thus disposing of the small remnants of the gratuity which had seemed so large. Only the officers, it was said, were poor enough to be compelled to walk.

A certain Militia colonel, it is recounted, took his own measures to ensure men transferring to the regular army. The response being, in his opinion, insufficient, he drew up such a fierce programme of route-marches, drills and fatigues, that his men were speedily brought to see that transfer would bring them to comparative peace, even though it meant immediate active service.

It is often the mistake of writers to imagine that the men from the Militia were completely untrained. Certainly these men were often in action still in their old uniforms and badges, which meant that they had no time to get acquainted with their officers and N.C.O.s or to imbibe any feeling of esprit de corps. Apart from that, the Militia-men were very

far from being raw material. The force had been mustered for years before men were taken from it in any great numbers, and was accustomed to train under a regular cadre.

One way there was, however, in which the constitution of the Militia did definite harm to the regular army. Men for the force were selected, in their districts, by lot, to complete the required quota, but it was possible to serve by substitution. Consequently many men were tempted by the offer of the substitution money to join the Militia, who would otherwise have been obvious candidates for the regulars.

By whatever means, a victorious, efficient, and great Army was raised. By 1809 there were 103 regular infantry regiments of the Line, many of them with more than one battalion. There were, in addition, a number of corps of various descriptions, with varying histories, sometimes not particularly edifying, who were wholly or mainly foreign in personnel.

The employment of foreign troops had, since the arrival of the Hanoverian monarchs, been a normal method of providing, ready trained, the reinforcements to an Army consistently neglected in peace-time. These had not been, hitherto, taken as regiments upon the British Establishment, but remained the property of their overlords, merely in British pay, 'for the duration.'

Our 60th Rifles might for long have been justly described as the Foreign Legion of Britain.

### HOW THE ARMY GREW

It had consisted, normally, of four battalions, none of which ever saw England. In 1797, however, there was raised in the Isle of Wight a fifth battalion. To it were drafted the remnants of Hompesche's Jägers, one of the many regiments of foreigners of the time, which had too fleeting an existence to be even remembered. This fifth battalion of the Royal Americans was, however, of the greatest importance. It was armed with the new rifle, and trained for skirmishing duties. Furthermore, it was allowed to adopt, with its disbanded Jägers, the green jacket which was their distinguishing mark in Continental armies, and was to become the sign for so many years of the Rifle Regiments of the Army.

Three years later the present Rifle Brigade was raised as the Experimental Rifle Corps—later the 95th Rifles. This is the only regular regiment of infantry that has never worn the red coat, having been green-jacketed from its birth.

At least one other regular regiment of the Line at the period was foreign in personnel, the 96th Queen's Germans. The many other foreign regiments actually raised on the British Establishment—as distinct from being 'in British pay'—received no numbers in the Line. A first group were filled by French *émigrés*. The old Irish Brigade of France, which refused to serve under the Republic, contributed largely in the early years of the war, and several of the proud old titles figured in our Orders of Battle. Six



regiments served in the Indies, but were disbanded in 1796. We do, however, find one regiment, Dillon's, still serving in Egypt in 1801. Similar to such was the famous regiment of Chasseurs Britanniques.

All of these, and there were many that I have not mentioned, were of fair quality at first. Large numbers of French Royalists fled to England from the Terror, and were eager to take service against the Republic. When Buonaparte restored the equilibrium of France the source of supply dried up, and the French regiments in our service deteriorated rapidly. They were henceforward dependent for supply on the prison camps and hulks. Renegades are always dangerous material, and the position was still further complicated as by no means all of the recruits so gained were even Frenchmen. Among the armies of the day, in no wise noted for their moral qualities, these regiments were recognised as being filled with the scum of Europe. Still other corps of almost equally doubtful quality were raised among the natives of Corsica, Sicily and other localities to which the forces of Britain were on occasion directed.

Switzerland was of old a happy recruiting ground for all armies. There were three Swiss regiments raised for Britain, De Rolle's, Meuron's and Watteville's. Stout corps they were, but their original personnel being frittered away in futile Mediterranean operations, they sank, like

the rest, into bands of semi-brigands and deserters.

The famous Brunswick Oëls Jägers made a very gallant entry into our Army List. Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick, nephew of George III, made a diversion during the Wagram campaign in his own Westphalian estates. Defeated in the end, he literally cut his way to the coast, and embarked the remnants of his force in British ships off the Frisian coast. From these men our Government formed the Brunswick Oëls Hussar and Jäger Regiments, dressed in black, as were the Duke's old troops. Contaminated, almost as soon as raised, by the drying up of the source of supply, the Brunswickers, good enough men in a fight, could never, owing to their habit of desertion, be trusted with the outposts.

In quite another category to all these must be placed the King's German Legion. The history of this, the finest mercenary investment ever made by this country, is not so generally known as it should be.

The Legion was formed consequent upon the over-running of the King's Hanoverian domains by the French under Mortier, and the disbandment of the Electoral Army in 1803. Many officers and men made their way to England, where the Legion was raised by royal proclamation. A first depôt was opened in Hampshire, and reception officers stationed at Plymouth and

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Harwich. The Legion eventually increased to five cavalry regiments, ten battalions, artillery and engineers, and took a very worthy part in every British campaign down to Waterloo. The infantry were of a quality nearly equal to that of our own regiments, while the cavalry, sad to relate, might in many respects have been taken as a model.

Three regiments of the German Imperial Army represented, down to the setting up of the German Republic, the King's German Legion. They were the 15th Uhlans (King's Lancers), the 73rd Fusilier Regiment, and the 10th Regiment of Field Artillery. In 1899 they were granted British battle honours by the Kaiser. The Uhlans received those of Peninsula, Garcia Hernandez and Waterloo, the remaining two regiments Peninsula and Waterloo.

Parenthetically it may be noted that one of these and two other German regiments bore an English honour. By an Order in Council of 1901 the 73rd Fusilier Regiment, the 79th Infantry, and the Hanoverian Jäger Battalion No. 10 were authorised to wear on their right sleeves, on a light blue badge, the inscription, 'Gibraltar,' an honour which the old German Corps of La Mothe, Redan and Hardenberg had won during the great siege under Elliott. The Gibraltar badge was discontinued in 1921.

The Crimean was the last campaign for which foreign regiments were raised by Britain. We

had then a British German Legion of several battalions, a Swiss Legion, and a plain Foreign Legion.

After 1815 there was the usual crop of disbandments. The foreign corps which had been raised were bound to disappear, as did most of the second battalions. But some even of the new regiments survived the axe and are with us still to-day.

The final augmentation of the Army was not so much actual as nominal. It was indeed a reduction, however paradoxical the statement may appear. The Indian Mutiny brought about the wreckage of the old constitution of the East India Company. Since its inception John Company had had its own Army, the regiments of which worked and fought beside 'King's' or 'Queen's' regiments of the regular garrison. These regiments were kept up to strength by recruits raised in England, and very largely Ireland, trained at the Company's *depôt* at Warley. After the Mutiny they were disbanded. Although many of the soldiers preferred to accept their discharges rather than transfer to the Imperial service, enough volunteers were found to form a dozen or so battalions which were to keep alive the old tradition of hard-fighting regiments. The Company's five regiments of cavalry became three, the 19th, 20th and 21st Hussars, of which the last named subsequently became the 21st Lancers (Empress of India's).

Having seen, quite briefly, how our Army has been raised, we may glance, as briefly, at the methods of providing and training officers for the force.

Feudalism lasted, in some degree, centuries longer in the Army than outside it. The gentry were fitted by nature for command, and by tradition and upbringing for the career of arms. Wellington, severe and often unsafe as a critic, wound up a rare proclamation of praise for his Peninsular Army by stating, as an all-sufficient explanation, "Its officers were gentlemen—the Gentlemen of England."

Behind this sentence lies much of the secret of our success. It tells a story of selfless devotion. It explains most reforms in interior economy, the unwavering loyalty of all ranks, the holding of high ideals when all about was rotten. It has provided the Army with the leaders it will most naturally follow.

Regiments, in the early days, were very much the property of their colonels. Great gentlemen commissioned to raise regiments would subcontract the labour, allotting captaincies to those who could bring in the men to fill them. Officers were largely dependent for reward, actually, on what they could make out of the administration of their commands. Allowances for upkeep were fixed on a definite scale, and economies went into the pockets of the administrators.

Colonels, besides a monetary interest in their

command in general, had also a company in the regiment, which would be commanded by a deputy. There grew up, too, half-officially, half-illegally, the curious system of 'contingent men,' fictitious privates borne on the roll, whose pay went to provide for all the unconsidered trifles necessary to the functioning of an army, for which hostile Parliaments refused to cater directly. Chelsea Hospital, the pensions of war widows and the remounting of the cavalry were some of the more obvious causes thus wholly or partially provided for.

In the miry environment of Georgian politics it is easy to see whither such a system led. Every commission had its price and every subsequent step its 'difference.' Faulty enough as a regularised scheme, the sale of commissions and promotions on several occasions deteriorated into what would now be termed a 'racket.'

King George I, insufficiently appreciated as an Army reformer, was the first to set his face against the traffic. That he was not more conspicuously successful in this direction was due to the fact that the Board of General Officers was as unanimous against him as were his purely civilian ministers. The first were merely too lazy to contemplate any upheaval, the second saw too clearly the political advantages adhering to a system in which every officer was bound to the Crown by the price of his rank.

The most that the King could do was to cause

to be published in 1720 the first of the series of official tables setting forth the prices of the various ranks. These tables were to continue to appear down to 1870. He found that the number of contingent men borne on a regimental roll was entirely dependent on the honesty of the colonel and his immediate subordinates, and that 'false musters' were common. This practice was checked to an extent, but circumstances made it impossible to abolish altogether the 'contingent men,' who were to continue, at all events semi-officially, for nearly a century more. Down almost to the close of the last century every regiment in the Service might be seen, twice yearly, marching in single file before an aged official known as the 'Muster Master.' His solemn duty it was to count the heads as they filed past, that the Government might not be defrauded.

Although no training centre for officers other than the drill grounds of their own regiments was set up, it is interesting to find, in Stuart days, the forerunner of an officers' training corps in the Troops of Life Guards. A writer of 1679 describes the King's Troop as composed of six hundred "young gentlemen of very considerable families, who are there made fit for military command."

Some of the abuses to which the purchase system lent itself are almost incredible. That Lord Panton who gave his name to the Street off the Haymarket contrived not only to hold com-

missions both in the Life Guards and the Foot Guards, but to get himself appointed a Paymaster in the Fleet into the bargain. Titular colonels of regiments have been known who were inmates of mad-houses. Regiments, even of the same arm, could be accurately graded by the expert as being of varying values to their colonels. Thus we find "Bluff Noll Mostyn" bemoaning the 'Irish rise' he had received in being transferred by the King from the colonelcy of the 5th Royal Dragoons to that of Cope's 7th Dragoons.

Exchange by purchase was a lateral development of the evil. Honest but poor officers were forced to grow old in junior ranks while young scions of great houses and other regiments purchased over their heads steps that should have been theirs. Officers with unlined pockets were persuaded, for a consideration, to exchange from regiments that were due to come home from the Indies into regiments that were to arrive on the station. Commissions were taken up by dashing warriors who had no intention of roystering farther afield than the precincts of the Court, to be held only until a step in some more fashionable and accessible regiment should be vacant.

Wolfe was a lieutenant of Marines at fourteen, and, as acting adjutant, virtually commanded Duroure's 12th Foot at the battle of Dettingen, when sixteen years of age only. Wellington himself, gazetted ensign at eighteen years of age,



literally hopped from regiment to regiment, horse or foot, it mattered not, so long as he 'dodged the column,' and was free to dance attendance at Viceregal Lodge. Finally, with seven years' service, mainly on carpet, he went boldly out to command the Thirty-third on active service, in a campaign where, as he said, one 'learned what not to do.' His brother-in-law, Pakenham, had been a major at seventeen; his cavalry leader in the Peninsula, Stapleton Cotton, had a regiment at twenty-one.

This presents, fortunately, the worst side of the picture, although by no means exaggerated. There was always to be found, even among those who gained advantages by such means, an earnest corps of officers, studious in military matters, devoted to their regiments, and earnest in patriotic service. They added to their zeal the great attributes of personal courage and the inherited gift of leadership.

The evil of royal or political influence is seen at its worst higher up the scale than among the regimental officers. Campaigns without number were wrecked, or badly shaken, by the general officers selected by those who had not the first idea of what was required in a general in the field. The most flagrant example, surely, is that of Lord Sackville. Tried by court-martial for his action, or rather lack of action, at Minden he was judged unfitted to serve his Majesty in any capacity. Behold him, later in the century,

slightly camouflaged under the new title of Lord St. Germain, as Secretary for War. The work of aged but senior generals is seen in the futile Convention of Cintra which followed Wellesley's victory of Vimeiro against the French Army of Portugal. Wellington's later diatribe against the quality of the generals that were being sent out to him is well known, and it was a fact, as he more than hinted, that one of his cavalry brigadiers had been confined in a mad-house.

Reform began on a large scale when the Peninsular War was well engaged. A cavalry officer, whom all peace-loving soldiers must have regarded as positively pestilential, John Gaspard le Marchant, Lieutenant-Colonel in the 7th Light Dragoons, produced, in 1799, a scheme for the foundation of a military college. There had been similar schemes put forward earlier, and le Marchant's, like the former ones, met with a cold reception. He had, however, chosen his moment well. Money is cheap in war-time, and trembling hands control the purse-strings. He won over, too, that stout old warrior the Duke of York, whose able administration of a war-time army is unjustly overlaid by an incorrect jingle and the all too true tale of his mistress's peculations.

Le Marchant's idea was ambitious. His military college was to include three departments. A First Department was intended to train boys on military lines without definitely committing them to an army career. The second, open to

cadets from the first, would prepare them to take up commissions. Yet a third department foreshadowed the Staff College.

Rejecting the First Department, Government experimented with the second and third from 1799 onwards at Marlow. The Third Department proved to be rather prematurely born, and was not to be effectively organised as the Staff College until the Crimean War taught another very severe lesson. The Second Department was, however, a success from its inception, and before the end of the wars a steady stream of—comparatively—well-trained youngsters was joining the regiments. The present buildings of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst were opened in 1813. In that same year the founder, General le Marchant, perished gallantly at the head of his brigade of heavy cavalry at Salamanca, a victory which was in no small measure due to his efforts. He is remembered very unworthily in an incomprehensible memorial set up in one of the dingiest corners of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Patronage, purchase and exchange were by no means at an end. But it was made increasingly difficult for the inefficient officer to continue his career. The old system, its ill effects very much mitigated by Sandhurst training, was in vogue well into the second half of the Good Queen's reign. Its effects are well illustrated by the anecdote concerning a genial hanger-on at Court

who, being asked what regiment he belonged to at the moment, answered affably, "'Pon my soul I don't know; but they wear green facings and you get to 'em from Waterloo Station."

Our Army, or even its overlords, must not be too harshly judged. It cannot be considered fairly apart from its correct setting among other armies. Most of the faults which are so glaring in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were paralleled, or even exceeded, in the Armies of the Continental Powers. Patronage, the whole business of exchange and purchase, and speculation of all kinds were at most times rife. There was generally added to these a strong curse of political intrigue of a kind which has never made headway in our Army. The country owes its immunity from Civil war through three centuries, to a very large extent to the Army, which has consistently stood aloof from every question of argument.

There are, at the present time, several doors for the entry of officers into the Army. The main gate is Sandhurst. Its cadets serve three terms, and pass by final examination to the *Gazette*. Cadets in Senior Contingents of the Officers' Training Corps are eligible, having qualified by examination, for appointment to regular commissions via the General List of the Territorial Army. Others, again, may qualify after a probationary period in the Supplementary Reserve. Since the War a number of cadetships

have been set aside, each term, for allocation to selected young N.C.O.s from the ranks.

All these methods of entry provide for a steady influx of young officers trained in the broad principles of their profession. Their further progress, and the good of the Service with it, is regulated at all essential points by tests both practical and theoretical.

Study of military history leads one to the inevitable conclusion that war is distinctly not an exact science, but rather an art with certain very definite if broad rules. Those schools of military thought which persist in adopting the scientific outlook have usually tumbled sadly in the face of the general possessing the spark of genius which marks the true artist. The beautifully regulated French armies fell away before Marlborough, as the meticulous arrays of the Frederickan school crumbled at the approach of Napoleon.

The very nature of the growth and formation of the British Army has kept it elastic in thought and free in action. Its untrammelled methods, the harmony which pervades its interior organisation, its extreme adaptability and the unparalleled zeal of all ranks have combined to provide a continual mystery to friend and foe, and to give it a value out of all proportion to its numerical strength.

## CHAPTER III

### THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

“A GREAT regiment,” it has been written, “is like a stately oak, it gathers strength and dignity with years. It is embodied tradition. Its past inspires reverence and respect; its present admiration and courage; its future confidence and hope. Firmly planted in its native soil, it survives the changes and stress of fretting years. Its memory is imperishable, and its heroic deeds are amongst the most treasured possession of a nation.”

In our own, as in no other army, the regimental ideal counts above all else. It is the rock-like basis on which the force is built. Dimly understood, wilfully ignored at times, it is imbedded deep in the heart of every true soldier. Loyal to his King and those in authority under him, often pitchforked into a regiment by the hazard of the recruiting situation of the moment, it is the good and honour of his regiment which is, above all other motives, the mainspring of a soldier's life. Trenches have been taken and battles won by men who have watched, with contempt, the failure, however glorious, of other

regiments. It is, of course, the team spirit, the riding-light of our national existence, reflected in the life and being of an army which collects battle honours like shields and cups that gleam in a club house.

In its original organisation the Army followed fairly closely on French lines, a pretty compliment on the part of its Stuart builders, pensioners as they were of the French Court.

At the head of the list stood the Guards. Our Army had its Life Guards, fashioned on the 'Maison du Roy.' The ranks were filled by private gentlemen, officered by men whose ranks in the Corps were generally far higher than those they held in the Army. In the first establishment of the King's Troop of Life Guards, all four corporals were Colonels. There were no non-commissioned officers. Mustering daily in the streets before their billets, performing duty about but not in the Court, were the Foot Guards.

Apart from the Guard, the senior regiment of each arm was 'Royal.' There were the 'Royal Regiment of Horse,' now Royal Horse Guards, the Royal Dragoons, still holding the same title, and the 1st Royals, or Royal Scots. The first-named had, from their raising, duties closer to the Royal person than those of other regiments of their arm, foreshadowing their eventual inclusion, in the nineteenth century, in the muster of the Household Cavalry.

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Each member of the Royal Family had his or her regiment, frequently one in each arm. There were, for instance, the King's and Queen's Dragoons, the Queen Dowager's Cuirassiers, the Princess Anne's Regiment, and so forth. A further small group there was of special regiments such as the Carabiniers, the 7th Royal Fusiliers—intended to act as escort to the guns—and the Greys, or North British Dragoons—who were raised as Horse Grenadiers. Of such importance was the grenade considered in the warfare of the seventeenth century that troops of Horse Grenadiers were attached to each troop of Life Guards, though they appear to have been used mainly to excuse these lordly gentlemen from trudging on foot on dismounted duties about the Sovereign.

The dignity of royalty suitably maintained, and the special needs of the service attended to, regiments, whether of Foot, Horse or Dragoons, were commonly known by the names of their colonels for the time being. This, too, was a custom well established on the Continent. It by no means followed that the colonels actually led the regiments bearing their names, even after the fashion of the Duke of Plaza Toro. It was, indeed, possible for them not to be soldiers at all. Usually, however, they were officers of high army rank, with a lieutenant-colonel to lead the regiment for them. A colonelcy was, and still is, a reward for services rendered. But whereas



to-day such an appointment is both honorary and honourable, the services which were thus rewarded under Stuart and Hanoverian monarchs were frequently of a dubious nature and not even military.

The appointments were as easily lost by wrong moves on the part of the holders. Lord Lothian, for instance, who in 1788 received the coveted colonelcy of the 1st Life Guards, was almost immediately deprived by King George III for having voted in favour of the Regency Bill. The appointment of Lord Harrington to the vacancy was regarded in many quarters as a dangerous innovation, he being but a colonel in the Army. It was justified by the admirable use he made of his appointment in the interests of his regiment, which became, under his influence, one of the most efficient in the Army.

That is by the way. Colonels, however appointed, were good as often as bad, and wielded a very great influence on their regiments even when they did not lead them. They distributed commissions, the regiments bore their names, and often wore their own livery colours as facings. We have seen how the remuneration which a colonel received depended largely on the manner of his administration. To be perfectly fair, the colonel was more often out of pocket than not. English gentlemen have been habitually out of pocket where the public service is concerned. There was an element of sheer luck about the

whole business. It is well illustrated by the debt which one cavalry colonel contracted, when, on top of a new issue of cocked hats which he had made, his regiment was ordered to don the new-fangled dragoon helmet, prior to its departure for Portugal.

In the calling of a regiment after its colonel there was one great obvious disadvantage. Colonels changed frequently, and every change meant a new designation. This did not make for esprit de corps, and was piled on the top of a whole host of other encumbrances to the development of the system. It has also set up, incidentally, a very ugly problem for the historian or student. It is impossible to read with understanding contemporary documents of early date without a very complete list of the old designations. Douglas's Regiment became Dumbarton's, or Fox's Marines Borr's, with too great an ease. It was still further complicated at an early date by the semi-official introduction of numbers. From about the year 1715 onwards new colonels mingle with old, and all with numbers, in a most disconcerting fashion.

Numbers were allotted with regard to seniority in the service, though in several cases to an accompaniment of heart-burning which endures to this day. The numbers themselves were complicated by the gaps which were created by every signature of peace and its consequent disbandments. Those junior regiments which

escaped reduction changed their numerical titles by moving up the scale.

Perhaps the most famous argument on the question of precedence is that waged between the Grenadier and Coldstream Regiments of Foot Guards. The Coldstream claims descent, with every right, from the regiment of Foot created by Cromwell for General Monk by the taking of detachments from two of the original Parliamentary regiments. The Grenadiers, on the other hand, were formed by Charles II in exile, in 1656, and came with him on his Restoration. Both regiments were disbanded, both re-raised after the Venner Riots. Indeed, the Coldstream, as has been seen, suffered no more than a theoretical disbandment, taking up arms a few moments after they had laid them down. The Grenadiers had fought in the French service against the Parliamentary troops at Dunkirk.

The seniority of the Grenadiers, or 1st Guards, rests, one supposes, on their Royalist origin as contrasted with the grimmer descent of the men of Coldstream. The latter march proudly down the centuries flaunting the motto of "Nulli Secundus" and salve their hurt by upholding a successful claim to take the left flank of the Brigade of Guards rather than second place. Is this petty? It has made the Army.

History and official sanction have kept alive one instance of confusion that arose through the old system of naming regiments. The 3rd of

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Foot in its early career laboured under a variety of titles. At first the Holland Regiment from its place of origin, it became, familiarly, the Holland Buffs, from the colour of its facings. In addition it was, of course, known by the names of a procession of colonels.

It so happened that, in the year 1741, the chances of war and a soulless authority ordained that the 3rd and 19th Regiments should be brigaded together in Germany. Now the 3rd Buffs were the pride, at the time, of Colonel Thomas Howard, while the 19th were the delight of Colonel the Hon. Charles Howard, to the great confusion of men in camp. Thus, taking the line of least resistance, the military eye glanced at the lapels of the two regimental coats, and the military voice proclaimed them the Buff and Green Howards respectively. The Buffs have held their title officially for a very long time, but it is only since the War that officialdom has climbed down from an untenable height and ordained that the 19th of Foot shall be the 'Green Howards' (Alexandra Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment).

There are still other 'Buffs.' At Dettingen that gallant little soldier King, George II, caught a ripple of buff facings as a stalwart red line surged forth to battle. "Bravo, Old Buffs," he cried as they went. One of his staff warned him that these were not the Buffs, but the 31st Foot, now the East Surrey Regiment. The King

had his *bon mot* ready. "Bravo, Young Buffs," he yelled in delight, and a British regiment was christened by its Sovereign on the field of battle. Nor will Scotland forgive if the statement is omitted that the secondary title of the Seaforth Highlanders is the 'Ross-shire Buffs.'

It is to be noted that, apart from the Green Howards, the name of one commoner only figures in the titles of our Army List. The 33rd West Riding Regiment is the Duke of Wellington's, being the first regiment he ever commanded. He was for long urged to give way to the popular demand that the regiment should receive his name during his own lifetime. His answer was always the same, "Not till I am gone."

Only in the year 1751 did the custom of calling regiments by the names of their colonels cease officially. The enforcement of the numerical system was helped by the fact that precedence was by then well established, and the numbers already in use. One finds traces of muttering old soldiers who announced in and out of season that things weren't "what they used to be in my young days," and insisted on sticking to the old titles, if it were only to confuse their listeners—and readers when they put pen to paper.

The numbers were to exist for a hundred and thirty years, but side by side grew up the territorial style of nomenclature. The granting of such titles was, in the first instance, a recruiting 'dodge.' In the year 1780 the Government,

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with war looming in several directions, was at its wits' end for men. Recruiting parties marched and counter-marched until the whole land was over-run and milked dry. Even Ireland, the happy hunting ground of the recruiting sergeant, was exhausted. Regiments were dying as they stood, in the Indies, East or West, without ever smelling powder. The 45th Foot was at Nottingham at the time, "wanting to complete" some three hundred men. A bright official wit inspired a promise that if the recruits were forthcoming in the neighbourhood, the regiment should receive the county title.

Local authorities combined with the military, and by means into which it were well not to inquire, the regiment at last stood complete. Entangled in red tape, the title was for long withheld. Nottingham and 45th became 'furiouser and fierouser,' the more so because other regiments were in the meantime acquiring titles much more easily.

At last a royal duke descended to inspect the brigade of which the 45th formed part. The stage was set. The curtain rose.

"Connaught Rangers—Present Hipe."

"Prince's Irish—Present Hipe."

There was a pause while a fuming C.O. filled his lungs. Then clear upon an outraged air came his call—

"Nottinghamshire Hosiers—Present Hipe."

The deed was done, and to-day the old 45th

are the 1st Bn. Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment).

A similar tale is told of the Gloucestershire Regiment. They also were denied a title for long, till on a review their colonel roared, "Neither King's, nor Queen's, nor Royal Marines; only old Bragg's Brass before and Brass behind; Twenty-eighth Foot—shoulder arms."

By the year 1809, however, the scheme was working well, and it is found that, out of a hundred and three infantry regiments of the Line, only five lacked titles, either royal or territorial. The distribution of regiments is some indication of the centres of population at the time, though it is to be doubted that the recruiting areas were by any means well defined. Devonshire, to quote but one example, had three regiments, of four battalions in all. Lancashire, on the other hand, had one regiment only.

Many regiments had two battalions, the Royal Scots four, and the 60th five, in this year. Generally during the Peninsular War one battalion only was on active service, preference being given to the senior. Thus, if a 1st battalion arrived in the Peninsula it was very often the case that the 2nd would transfer most of its fit men, and then return to England as a cadre.

The titles of the cavalry had for long been regularised. All regiments save the Guards had numbers, to which a more particular title was in most cases added. A final reorganisation had

been made in 1788. In that year two anachronisms had disappeared. The old 1st and 2nd Troops of Life Guards—two other troops had been reduced after the War of the Austrian Succession—had deteriorated to something far less than the bodies of private gentlemen that graced the Stuart Court. The positions were filled by the sons of place-hunting City merchants, so that the corps were known colloquially as ‘Cheesemongers,’ a not very dignified adjunct of the Court. They were swept away, and in their places, with their precedence, duties and privileges, were raised the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Life Guards. As nuclei for these regiments were used the old attached Horse Grenadiers, who had always been enlisted men, though of a class superior to that from which ordinary recruits were drawn.

The four remaining regiments of Horse were at the same time recalled from their spiritual and temporal home in Ireland. Mounted on chargers which would have joyed the eyes of mediæval knights, their ranks were filled with old soldiers whose steady drill was unequalled in the world, though purely spectacular. There was, too, more than a suspicion that they were tainted with the risky political flavour of the island in which they were quartered and mainly recruited. Home, then, they came, to undergo a drastic re-organisation, from which they emerged as the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Regiments of Dragoon Guards.



An important change in infantry nomenclature and constitution dates its commencement from January of 1803, when Sir John Moore's Regiment, the 52nd Oxfordshire, became Light Infantry. Heretofore each battalion had its Grenadier and Light Companies, called collectively the Flank Companies, composed of its picked men. There had long been a most pernicious habit of drafting these companies into provisional Grenadier or Light Battalions for special purposes. They were sometimes sent on whole campaigns with which their parent regiments had no concern. The custom of thus denuding regiments of their best men seriously weakened their fighting efficiency.

The conversion of whole regiments into Light Infantry, therefore, brought obvious advantages to the Army from the point of view of organisation, and supplied a powerful new arm, the necessity for which was one of the lessons of the American Rebellion. It created for the regiments selected one more ideal to fight for. There were seven such regiments by 1815, though one, the 90th, gave up its title on becoming, in 1881, the 2nd Bn. Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).

Four regiments have been added to the Light Infantry since Waterloo, the present Somersetshire, 2nd Bns. K.O.Y.L.I. and Durham L.I. and the 1st Bn. Duke of Cornwall's. The 2nd Bn. K.O.Y.L.I., raised in 1839 as the 2nd Madras Europeans under the East India Com-

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pany, came later on to the British Establishment as the 105th Foot. It is the only regiment that has been Light Infantry from the date of its raising. It was matched in the Bombay Forces by the conversion of the 2nd Bombay Europeans into Light Infantry in the latter end of 1839. The regiment became the 106th (Bombay L.I.) after the Mutiny and is now the 2nd Bn. Durham L.I.

The remaining light regiment, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, of which the 1st Battalion was the 32nd Foot, gained its title as a distinction. The Commander-in-Chief submitted, and Her Majesty, on 22nd February, 1858, approved, that, "in consideration of the enduring fortitude and persevering gallantry displayed in the defence of the Residency of Lucknow, the 32nd be clothed, equipped and trained as a Light Infantry Regiment."

. . . . .

Most soldiers have heard tell of the Cardwell Scheme, and it received a puff of publicity when, in 1931, it celebrated a quiet Jubilee. It owed its birth and, we dare proclaim, its ultimate success, to the necessity for organising proper and periodic reliefs for the Empire garrison. Child of the brain of an otherwise forgotten peer, Lord Cardwell, it was fostered by a War Minister who is even deeper sunk in oblivion, Mr. Childers. It was a major stirring of the Army from the deep sleep which had lasted—

with vague but mainly departmental stirrings—since 1815.

Until the year 1881 every battalion save those of the twenty-five senior regiments of the Line and the Rifles, which were two battalion regiments, had minded its own business very strictly. Each had its own *depôt*, to which its recruits were sent. A regiment ordered abroad posted its *depôt* company to Chatham, to a provisional battalion vulgarly known as the 'Pongoes.' Any shortcoming was made good by a wholesale drafting of men from regiment to regiment without regard for sentiment, *esprit de corps* or the general good of the Service.

Although things had a little improved by 1881 there had been many cases of regiments remaining on colonial stations for twenty, thirty or even forty years. Those few men who were able to resist the attacks of the enemy, and more especially those who survived bad hygiene and the rigours of tropical climates, spent most of their lives in exile, either in their own regiments or transferred to outcoming corps when a rare relief took place.

The Cardwell Scheme proposed, and carried out in the face of considerable opposition, a wholesale rearrangement of the infantry of the Line into two battalion regiments, of which one battalion in each should be in England, the other abroad. Each regiment was to have its own *depôt* for the reception and training of recruits

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who were, when trained, to be posted to the home battalion. This was to provide all drafts for the battalion on foreign service. A roster for foreign service was to be established, and, when it came to the turn of a battalion to proceed overseas, the sister battalion would set a straight course for England.

Mercifully, perhaps, there had been some slight preparation. Nine years earlier a number of 'Brigade Depôts' had been formed, and certain battalions linked for draft-finding purposes. Stalwart old war-dogs had shied a little even at this, but had not foreseen anything like the full horror that impended.

The Army positively howled with rage. Do away with the numbers (it was these that were precious rather than the territorial titles)? Join with a regiment with which one's own could wipe the floor? Where and who was this unspeakable Cardwell? The scheme, when fully worked out, was found to be fouler yet. There were nine distinct colours for facings in the infantry, running into shades almost without number. It was calmly proposed to sweep away the lot and with them the elegantly pointed cuffs from the sleeves of the tunics.

'Jam-pot sleeves' and collars were to be in four colours only in future. White should represent England, yellow Scotland, green for Erin, while 'royal' regiments would wear blue. Militia and Volunteer battalions of the regimental

district were to be drawn into the regiments which owned the recruiting area.

Backed as it was by many thinking soldiers, and notably by Lord Wolseley, the scheme was pushed on in spite of all opposition. In parts it worked without difficulty. There was little objection in linking such regiments as the 43rd and 52nd into the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, for example, although the 43rd was, on paper, the Monmouthshire. They had met at Sir John Moore's Shorncliffe Camp in 1801 and marched side by side through many a Peninsular battle. There were often, again, as in Gloucestershire and Middlesex, two battalions with different numbers which could easily be fused.

Many changes were more drastic. The new West Yorks had been the 14th Buckinghamshire—and less than a century earlier the Bedfordshire. The new Lancashire Fusiliers had been the 20th East Devonshire, while the 69th South Lincolns became, doubtless with much surprise, the 2nd Royal Welch. Four battalions who had almost forgotten they were, or had been, Scots, bared their knees once more to the kilt. The 92nd Gordon Highlanders, though retaining their proud title, became the junior battalion to the 75th Stirlingshire.

Much of the reorganisation, as far as titles were concerned, was necessary for recruiting purposes in view of the great redistribution of our

population since the beginning of the century. Such densely populated counties as Lancashire and Yorkshire were properly provided for in the Army List. Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon, Monmouth and Rutland lost their regiments altogether, and so, at first, did Hertfordshire, only to regain it in a share of the Bedfordshire after the last War. A happy inspiration gave the 34th Cumberland and the 55th Westmorland the joint title of the Border Regiment.

Ireland, birthplace of the true freelance, must be honoured in the List. Some regiments, like the 18th Royal Irish, had always been Irish. The 83rd County of Dublin and the 86th Leinster were put from scarlet into green that Ireland might boast her own Royal Irish Rifles. The famous 88th Connaught Rangers received the debris of the 94th, which had been badly mauled in the first Boer War. This regiment held the traditions if not the direct descent of an old 94th Scotch Brigade which had been disbanded in 1818. To complete the Irish regiments were taken the Royal Canadian Regiment (into the Leinster) and certain of the old 'John Company' regiments, which had always attracted the roving sons of Erin to their ranks.

One regiment, apart from the existing two battalion regiments, escaped the amalgamations. It was the 79th Cameron Highlanders, which, after remaining for some time as a one-battalion regiment, raised a second for itself.

### *SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER*

Over the question of the new facings the regiments took up arms in no uncertain fashion, waging a running fight which has lasted fifty years. The jam-pot cuffs were easily disposed of, and gradually, a few at a time, regiments extracted the authority to revert to their old historic facings. Many of them had very glorious memories, and authority was to a large extent overruled by regimental sentiment.

There are eight regiments of infantry with yellow facings, but only two of them are Scots. There are eight English regiments, furthermore, which wear green of varying shades. Indeed, the green facings were worn by one Irish regiment only, all the others being 'Royal.' It was odd that this should have been the Connaught Rangers, since their own facings of yellow had been for many years their peculiar pride and joy.

Among purely English regiments no one could imagine the Buffs, for instance, consenting to white facings. The Duke of Wellington's regained their unique scarlet. Three years ago only (1931), the Leicestershire received permission to revert to their original 'pearl-grey.' In an Army which has lost, in general practice, its full dress, the importance attached to such things is significant of the proud tradition that rules. The only problem which cannot be completely solved is, of course, that of a regiment whose two battalions each had different facings, and are each anxious to perpetuate them. In such a

regiment, for instance, as the Royal West Kent, the 1st Bn., or 50th Foot, was as renowned for its black facings as the 2nd Bn., or 97th Foot, was for its trimmings of 'celestial blue.' Here, fortunately, the problem has solved itself by reason of the regiment being a 'Royal' one.

It is odd to reflect that, under the Cardwell Scheme, two regular battalions of the same regiment rarely meet. The 1st and 2nd Bns. of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, for example, have met thrice only. In 1886 the 2nd Battalion, on its way home from the Nile, put in at Malta and met its comrades there. On January 7th, 1915, the remnants of the two gallant battalions clasped hands in Bailleul. Finally, the two met in Dublin in 1922, the 1st being *en route* for the 'Shiny East,' while the 2nd went on to find the last Guard for Dublin Castle. In a good many cases battalions joined for a while after the War, for reorganisation, while much of India was still being garrisoned by Territorial battalions.

Lord Cardwell was, frankly, the salvation of the Army. To-day battalions in India and elsewhere abroad stand at war strength, the ranks filled with fully-trained, hardened soldiers, the equal—we dare to say the superiors—of any other regular troops in the world. We are apt to deplore the fact that battalions on the Home establishment are training cadres, filled, or sometimes only half-filled, with changing batches of



youngsters. Yet actually these battalions have a backbone of old and wily N.C.O.s, many, if not most, with years of foreign service behind them. The troops, young though they be, have all passed through the fire of the *depôt* and the furnace of brigade and divisional training—physically and mentally fit as men can be. Trained to the minute, these battalions would, on mobilisation, receive the whole of their regiment's reservists. Now the Army Reserve, given a fortnight, or even less, to settle down and air its views on young soldiers, is the very salt of the earth.

'Nineteen-fourteen' was Cardwell's supreme justification. An expeditionary force was sent out which was the finest British force since Wellington crossed the Pyrenees, and he had taken five years of active service to train that army. The Declaration of War found each regimental district with its own organisation ready to be expanded to meet the needs of the emergency in a way in which it would have been impossible to meet them before. Regulars, Territorials and Service Battalions, all fitted into the scheme with the minimum of fuss, and went forth to battle fired with the enthusiasm, not only of men fighting for a just cause, but that which came from being Buffs, men of the Notts and Derby, men of the Middlesex Die-hards.

Now that the new tradition is established it is safe to let sentiment swing back. The zest which

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is given to the study of regimental history is recalling to men's minds the glory of the old numbers. They are being freely used in many quarters, and even reappearing in badges and on colours in some few instances. The centuries of a regiment's fame are welded into one glorious sweep of colour, and the Army can fight while it dreams.

This study of regimental history is a serious but by no means a dull thing, and the Army Educational Corps has, during its short career, earned much gratitude for the part which it is playing in the revival of this study. Here again Lord Cardwell, unknowingly, helped much. By establishing for each infantry regiment a fixed depôt, he gave it a permanent home. The Depôt can be depended upon to remain steady under all circumstances, and generations of officers and N.C.O.s foster there the regimental tradition in the newly-joined men. Few regiments now but have a museum at the Depôt, most of them formed since the War. Here the recruit, who is the important man, can learn lessons he will never forget. To visit such a museum as that at the Rifle Depôt is a military tonic. Even the very tombstone of the 'father' of the Rifle Brigade has been lifted from Kentish obscurity and re-erected in the barracks at Winchester.

Changes due to the War have been mercifully few. The proposed and partially effected disbandment of four cavalry regiments was averted,

in 1922, by the system of amalgamations under which the two regiments of Life Guards became one, the 3rd, 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards joined with the 6th and 7th Dragoon Guards and the Inniskillings, the 13th, 14th and 15th Hussars amalgamated with the 18th, 20th and 19th, the 16th and 17th Lancers with the 5th and 21st of that arm. It has been left to the regiments themselves to evolve methods of completing these amalgamations from an internal point of view.

Although the Cavalry of the Line could not come entirely under the Cardwell Scheme, battalions of cavalry being contrary to all military procedure, yet the cavalry were, in pre-war days, linked in pairs for drafting purposes, and depôts established for such linked regiments. The drafting of the cavalry has been complicated by the amalgamations. There was, for some time after the War, a cavalry dépôt at Canterbury. This has ceased to exist and each regiment on the Home establishment receives and trains its own recruits, as the Household Cavalry have always done. By the formation of the whole of the Cavalry of the Line into one 'Corps,' every regiment at home has been made available for finding drafts to whichever regiment abroad requires them, a system which, admittedly faulty from a sentimental point of view, is the best which can be evolved under the circumstances.

More recently again two more cavalry regiments, the 11th Hussars and 12th Lancers, have

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been converted, without sacrifice of title or precedence, into Cavalry Armoured Car Regiments. There were also, in 1922, certain reductions made in the infantry of the Line. The first group of reductions entailed no erasure of famous titles from the Army List, consisting as it did in the disbandments of the 3rd and 4th Battalions of certain regiments which had, generally in fairly recent years, acquired them. These were the two regiments of English Rifles, the Royal Fusiliers and the Worcester and Middlesex Regiments.

The second group of disbandments left a gap that was sad indeed, that of the Irish regiments made necessary by the setting up of the Irish Free State in 1922. The disappearance of the old 18th Royal Irish, with memories dating back to William III, was tragic. No more may the Connaught Rangers at once scandalise the stickler for military precision and warm the hearts of their comrades. 'Dubs,' Munsters and Leinsters, stubborn old children of 'John Company,' have gone their ways. The Royal Irish Rifles escaped the axe because of their connection with Ulster, while a last-minute reprieve spared the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who became one battalion linked to the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

A sad epilogue was enacted when officers and men, down whose faces the tears ran unashamed, carried the precious Colours up the hill to Windsor Castle, to lay them at the feet of the King for whom they had fought.

The Army gained, during the War, one infantry regiment only, the Welsh Guards, who received their baptism of fire at Loos, and rapidly fitted themselves to take their place in the ranks of the Brigade, both in scarlet and in Service dress. Out of the War also emerged the Royal Tank Corps and the Royal Corps of Signals. The title of the former was almost forced upon it. The new arm arrived on the battle-field with much secrecy, labelled officially as the Heavy Branch of the Machine Gun Corps. There is an explanation of the title which states that the tanks were thus labelled on the railway when they went out to France. It is more certain that the name was invented by the infantry. At all events, after several half-hearted official attempts at nomenclature, 'tanks' they became. Once more a joke made on the very battle-field gained its own honourable tradition.

## CHAPTER IV

### NICKNAMES FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD

WE have seen, very briefly, how the regiments got their titles and standing in the Army List. Proud as they are of them, they are yet prouder of their nicknames. For these are in the soldier's own vein, coined, very often, on the battlefield, won in odd corners of the world, incorporating something of the whimsical soul of the fighting man, twisting to honour the grins of his comrades or the jeers of his enemies.

Best known, perhaps, are the nicknames that come from the coloured facings, now little more than a fierce tradition. We have seen how, in two instances, such nicknames have blossomed out in the light of official recognition and become primary titles. There is one other instance, in the Royal Horse Guards.

No regiment of cavalry has had more titles than this. Royal Regiment of Horse, The Horse, *tout court*, the Earl of Oxford's Horse, the Oxford Blues, or the Blew Guards, these are the main names by which that staunch old regiment has laboured through the centuries. But best known of all, in an Army where red has always been the

predominant tone, the regiment has fought through history and taken its place in our affections as the 'Blues.' Its official title is now the Royal Horse Guards (The Blues).

Well known are the Cherrypickers, the crimson-overalled 11th Prince Albert's Own Hussars. Writers have searched unnecessarily for an origin which should be obvious, dragging in the apocryphal story of the robbery of a cherry orchard in Spain. A variation into 'Cherubims' is also acknowledged by the regiment, not, as one writer remarks, without a certain, and literal, *arrière pensée*.

Although to the uninitiated there was little difference in the full-dress uniforms of the Dragoon Guards, each regiment had its own distinctive helmet plumes and facings by which the old soldier could tell it at a glance. Soldiers still speak of the Third Canaries, the Fourth Blue, the Fifth Green, and the Seventh Black Horse. The latter title is often erroneously attributed to the colour of the regiment's horses, similar titles having been bestowed, in each case officially, on the 'Bays' and the 'Greys.' Even in the latter case there is some doubt as to whether the title did not derive originally from the grey doublets of the men rather than their horses. The grey jackets were worn from the foundation of the regiment, whereas the 'greys' were taken over from the Dutch Life Guards of William III, and are first mentioned in 1702.

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The 13th Hussars have a collection of colour nicknames. Of old they were known as the 'Geraniums' or the 'Evergreens' from their facings of green. Their most recent facings, however, were white, and they are to-day popularly known as the 'Lilywhites,' a nickname they share with the Coldstream Guards and several Foot Regiments of the Line who sport the white facings of England.

The 2nd Scottish Rifles were the 90th 'Perthshire Greybreeks.' The regiment had a curious origin. Graham of Lynedoch was a middle-aged civilian whose wife died in the South of France at the height of the Terror. Graham started home across France to bring his wife's body for burial in Scotland. In one town *en route* the cortège was halted by a revolutionary mob searching for Royalist arms. In spite of all protests the 'People's' officials insisted on wrenching open the coffin before allowing the outraged Graham to proceed on his way.

To Scotland he came at last, vowing to devote life and fortune to the avenging of the insult put upon him. He mortgaged his estates and raised with the proceeds the 90th Perthshire Regiment of Foot. For long holding no more than the honorary colonelcy of the regiment he had raised, Graham was employed on the Continent in various capacities under the Government. Finally, in 1809, sixty years of age, he came direct on to the Army List as a Major-General. In



spite of his late start he was one of Wellington's most trustworthy divisional generals, reaching his zenith in independent command at Barrosa, on March 7th, 1811. A soldier, Caddell of the 28th, gives him sufficient epitaph—"What could not Britons do when led by such a man?"

The Perthshires, to return from digression, were born at a time when the country, entirely unprepared, plunged light-heartedly into war. Government stocks of cloth and equipment running low, the 90th went to fight the Egyptian campaign in grey trousers instead of regulation black, and, incidentally, in light dragoon helmets instead of infantry shakos. They may be considered lucky, in our Army, to have escaped with so polite a nickname as the 'Perthshire Greybrecks.' The Royal Scots Fusiliers are, on occasion, known as the 'Earl of Mar's Greybrecks.'

In similar vein we have 'Guisse's Greens' (Royal Warwicks), the 'Green Linnets' (Dorsetshire), and the 'Saucy Greens' (Worcester Regiment)—all regiments that either now, or in the past, have been famous for their green facings. There are even 'Howard's Green' (South Wales Borderers), by no means to be confused, of course, with the Green Howards.

A typically English touch went to the naming of the 2nd Essex. The old 56th, as they were, first appeared in 1756. They had a mind, it was said, to facings of royal blue, which were refused. Determined to be royal at all costs, the gallant

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corps adopted as its facings the puce livery colour of the King of France's mistress. The 'Pompadors' they are to this day, having as their 1st Battalion the 'Little Fighting Fours' or 44th Foot.

Many regiments were baptised with a laugh. An honest county corps is the Wiltshire. Caught one dark night dragging a pond with hay-rakes, a party of the regiment confessed they were fishing for smuggled brandy kegs. Nimble wits, however, declared they were looking for the moon, and the 'Moonrakers' they became and remained. The Royal Scots, not content with a tercentenary, lay so strenuous a claim to still further antiquity that the Army calls the regiment 'Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard.'

It is said that the name originated when the Scots were in the French service, where they took precedence even over the old Regiment Picardie. Officers from the two regiments were arguing their respective claims one night, in support of which one of the Picardie officers maintained that it was his corps which had kept guard over the Holy Sepulchre after the Crucifixion. The Scots were ready.

"Obviously, messieurs," answered one of their number, "we had not the guard that night. *We* should not have slept at our posts."

A king himself laughed as he nicknamed the Inns of Court Regiment. Stout little Farmer George saw them first on a Hyde Park Review in 1803.

“ Who are these? ” asked the King.

“ All lawyers, Sire.”

“ What, all lawyers? Call ’em Devil’s Own.”

There are nicknames, again, that derive from cap-badges. Who has not heard of the ‘ Back Numbers,’ ‘ Brass before and Brass behind ’—the Gloucester Regiment? The story of their famous back-to-back stand at Alexandria in 1801, whereby they won their back badge, is too well known to need repetition. It is not so widely realised that the back badge worn now in the caps is larger than it was before the War. This enlargement is an additional distinction granted for a noble repetition of the earlier stand, at Givenchy in 1916.

The Queen’s in their Pascal Lamb wear the device of Charles II’s Queen, Catherine of Braganza, who is remembered again in the ‘ Braganza ’ Regimental March of the regiment. Not only for that are the Queen’s known as the ‘ Lambs ’ or ‘ Kirke’s Lambs.’ A hard-bitten regiment it was that came home from Tangier, with Colonel Kirke at its head. Employed in the West Country and later in Ireland against rebels, its ferocity became proverbial. Colonel Kirke rounded up the misguided peasantry who had fought for ‘ King ’ Monmouth. He and his regiment inspired more terror than dread Judge Jeffreys himself.

Britannia sits sedate as the cap-badge of the 9th of Foot, the Norfolk Regiment. Incidentally,

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the regiment has stolen naval thunder by using 'Rule Britannia' as its march. When Wellesley was making history, the Catholic folk of Portugal took the badge to be a saint's medallion. Its wearers gained a reputation for piety they were doubtless far from meriting, and were dubbed the 'Holy Boys' by a delighted Army. Scandal has attributed the name to the more ignoble occasion when the Norfolks are alleged to have sold their Bibles for beer. Another regiment, the Carabiniers, is said once to have sacrificed its boots in the same noble cause.

Not so well known as nicknames are the 'Pig and Whistle Light Infantry' for the H.L.I., and 'The Pigs' for the 2nd Bn. Black Watch. They are explained by the Elephant and Bugle Horn badge of the 71st and the Elephant which the old 73rd gained in the Mahratta War.

Nicknames there are that have caused belt buckles and whips to whistle in the garrison towns of old, when beer was twopence a quart and pay night was one glorious 'beano.' It was certainly unkind to call the Bedfordshires the 'Peacemakers,' and quite unjust. They have had their share of fighting, from the days of Marlborough onwards, though, prior to the reorganisation of 1881, their Regimental Colour was virginal. Not until then were the victories of the War of the Spanish Succession granted as battle honours. Nor were the Life Guards any more pleased at being called the 'Cheesemongers' for reasons

already explained. Old soldiers still remember that it was a sure *casus belli* to refer to them as 'Piccadilly Butchers,' a name which testified to their numerous appearances in aid of the Civil power in London.

The 14th Hussars have a nickname which may not sound very complimentary but is accepted with a laugh. They are the 'Emperor's Chambermaids.' There was a grand looting after the battle of Vittoria. The French Army, and King Joseph of Spain, the Emperor's brother, lost their complete baggage trains. The share of the 14th Light Dragoons included a homely household utensil, made, however, of massive silver, which still features as a centre-piece on their mess table.

Royal Horse Artillery nicknames have loomed large of late. Mainly founded on glowing incidents of the history of the Royal Regiment, they have come more and more into official usage as titles rather than nicknames. 'A' Battery Royal Horse Artillery has for many years been the Chestnut Troop officially. 'F' is the Sphinx Battery, having received the grant of the badge with the other units of Abercrombie's force. 'G,' as 'Mercer's Troop,' remembers a gallant officer who led it at Waterloo and was as proficient with the pen as he was with his battery. 'H,' 'Ramsay's Troop,' recalls the dashing officer who charged his battery through the encircling French at Fuentes d'Onoro.

"Suddenly," writes Napier, "the multitude

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became violently agitated, an English shout pealed high and clear, the mass was rent asunder, and Norman Ramsay burst forth sword in hand at the head of his battery, his horses, breathing fire, stretched like greyhounds along the plain, the guns bounding behind them like things of no weight, and the mounted gunners followed close, with heads bent low and pointed weapons, in desperate career." A glorious battle picture.

The 'L' or 'Nery' Battery remembers the gallant stand of its predecessors on the Retreat from Mons. 'M' the 'Eagle Troop' won its distinction in Scinde; while 'O' the 'Rocket Troop' was the only British unit that fought at the battle of Leipzig. Wellington refused to smile upon the rocket as a weapon and made the rocketeers behave like ordinary gunners at Waterloo, to their very great chagrin.

Patches of bright history gleam out in more nicknames than can be recounted. All the world knows what the 'Die-hards,' the 57th Middlesex, did at Albuhera. The 'Minden Boys,' or Lancashire Fusiliers, are one of the 'Unsurpassable Six' that gained immortality for the Foot at Minden in 1759. 'Kingsley's Stand' they are also, after the name of their colonel on that great day.

A Foot regiment, the old 11th Devons, is sometimes referred to as 'Sankey's Light Horse.' It remembers thus its colonel of very early days, when, during the War of the Spanish Succession,

it formed part of the force under the Earl of Peterborough in Spain itself. The Earl was certainly eccentric, but a great man for mobility. On one occasion he mounted the unfortunate Eleventh on mules to get them in time to battle.

Even the Horse Marines are not so legendary as is generally imagined. As the nickname of the 17th Lancers—more generally known as the ‘Death or Glory Boys’—the term recalls their service, in 1796, on board the *Hermione* frigate *en route* for the West Indies. The Welch Regiment received a nickname from Lord Nelson himself. By a curious coincidence both 41st and 69th, which to-day make up that regiment, served under the little Admiral, and he always called them, lovingly, his ‘Old Agamemnons’ after the name of his flagship.

It might not be expected that a regiment could be proud of being called to its face the ‘Dirty Half Hundred.’ Yet the name was won on Vimeiro’s field, when the Fiftieth (1st Bn. Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment) wrung praise from the grim ‘Commander of the Forces’ himself.

“Not a good-looking regiment,” he called them, “but devilish steady.” Good-looking they certainly were not when the fight was done. Black were the facings of the old 50th, and cheap-dyed, apparently, was Government cloth. Often during the hot day, black cuffs had been dragged across sweating faces, and amid the laughter of

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comrades the new nickname was given, and stuck. They had received earlier ones. When they came back from Egypt ridden with ophthalmia they were the 'Blind Half Hundred.' They were, again, the 'Mediterranean Greys' from the long years they had spent and the grey hairs they had collected on the Rock of Gibraltar.

Pride in the territorial titles does not prevent the regiments from remembering, and often using, their old numbers. Several of the nicknames recall them, best of all, perhaps, the 'Fighting Fifth' or Northumberland Fusiliers.

Salamanca's great battle cost the Devons 341 out of 412 in the ranks. The 'Bloody Eleventh' they have been since that day. The 'Excellers' may be traced without difficulty to the 40th (XL) Prince of Wales's Volunteers, while the 'Five and Threepennies' are the 53rd King's Shropshire Light Infantry. You would need the explanation, maybe, that the 'Pothooks' were once the 77th, and are now the 2nd Bn. the Middlesex Regiment, or that the 'Ups and Downs' wore the figures '69' in the shako plates before they became the 2nd Battalion the Welch Regiment.

In an army where smartness is a key-note a regiment must be exceptional to earn a nickname for its faultless appearance. Yet the 17th Lancers have been 'Bingham's Dandies,' while the old 46th, gay in the Royal Livery of Scotland, were 'Murray's Bucks' as long ago as the mid-eighteenth century. Pride of the proud city are



the 'Dandy Ninth,' the 9th Royal Scots, or Edinboro' Highlanders, a territorial battalion, and the only kilted one in the regiment.

Most gorgeous regiment of a very gorgeous period, the 10th Royal Hussars were the joy of the even more gorgeous Prince Regent who became their colonel in 1810. It was popularly claimed, indeed, that the "regiment was so precious that it required to be taken care of like valuable china as it moved from station to station." 'China Tenth' it was called then, though the nickname has lost point into the 'Shiny Tenth' of to-day. 'Shiny' is the normal nickname of all regiments bearing the number Seven. It is, or has been, applied to the 7th Hussars, the 7th Royal Fusiliers, and the 7th Battalion City of London Regiment (T.A.).

Not many of Napoleon's Eagle standards fell into enemy hands. They were too fiercely guarded for that. Three of the British regiments that gained fame in this particular way—Royals, Greys and Royal Irish Fusiliers—have often been known as the 'Birdcatchers' or, in soldier French, the 'Aiglers.'

British humour only could persuade regiments to glory in such a nickname as 'Nobody's Own.' Two regiments, the only ones among the cavalry with no title other than numerical, have claimed this one. They are the 13th and 20th Hussars, both now forming part of amalgamated regiments. A poet of the latter has sung :

*NICKNAMES FROM THE BATTLEFIELD*

“ Vimeiro beheld them, the Cape and old Nile,  
By Marne, Somme and Lys have they shown  
How in trench or in saddle to meet with a smile  
Each challenge to Nobody's Own.

“ They fought like the rest in Chetwode's Brigade,  
With their dead are wide battlefields strown,  
And at the last roll-call they'll not feel afraid  
To answer, ' Here—Nobody's Own.' ”

A lovable Army. Do you wonder we're  
fanatics?

## CHAPTER V

### KEEPING MEMORY GREEN

IN a hundred ways of which the civilian knows little or nothing, the Army keeps alive the memory of a past of which he often knows less.

Badges, customs, nicknames, scraps of song, anniversaries—these are the golden links of a glorious chain of history, the strong cement of army life.

Who now remembers the battle of Arroyo-dos-Molinos, where in 1811 the 34th Foot met their opposite numbers of the French Army and dealt roughly with them? Yet this story is positively the theme song of the Border Regiment, who celebrate the battle each year on October 28th. We shall read the tale of the Borders' Drums. For many years the 34th sported the red-and-white plume of their French victims, until the general issue of a red-and-white tuft to the infantry made the distinction disappear. Queen Victoria, champion always of her soldiers' honour, then decreed that the name of the unique battle honour should be blazoned on the Regimental Colour.

Similarly forgotten, except by the curious, is

the glorious little scrap of Ramnugger, which took place on November 23rd, 1848. It was one of a hundred fights that set the jewel of India in the British Crown. Every trooper of the 14th Hussars, now 14/20th, can tell you how his regiment won fame there, and the Army always speaks of the 14th as the Ramnugger Boys. An outsider invited to attend a Ramnugger Ball may accept and count himself lucky—but only if his head be of the old English strength. The 14th specialise in unique battle honours. They only of the Cavalry bear ‘Douro,’ ‘Pyrenees’ and ‘Persia’ on their drum banners.

Honour in the Army centres round the colours, those flaming silks that are guarded and honoured like royal personages. Yet to the civilian even these are a mystery.

In the normal Line infantry battalion two colours are carried. The first is the King’s Colour, a Union Jack bearing the regimental title, and the ‘Great War’ honours only. The second, or Regimental Colour, is of the colour of the regiment’s facings, or, in the case of the ‘lilywhite’ English regiments, a Cross of St. George. On it are borne the devices of the regiment and all battle honours granted for services prior to 1914.

Those regiments which have no official ‘device’—they are printed in the Army List—have until recently carried on the Regimental Colour the ‘Union Badge’ of the Rose, Thistle and Sham-

rock. An Army Order of 1930, however, granted such regiments the privilege of selecting for themselves a badge to be placed at the centre of the Regimental Colour. The first grants under this order were made in 1932. The South Wales Borderers, in electing to bear "within a wreath of immortelles the Roman numeral XXIV" honour their old numerical title together with one of the gallant incidents that made its wearing a privilege. After the disaster of Isandlwana in the Zulu War of 1879, Lieutenants Melville and Coghill gave their lives to save the Queen's Colour of the 1/24th, which the regiment still cherishes. Queen Victoria crowned the precious rag with a wreath of immortelles when it was brought home, and gave to each battalion a silver wreath to crown the colour staff in memory of the day.

The Lancashire Fusiliers have also reverted to their former number by adopting the "Roman numeral XX ensigned with the Red Rose." Other recent grants are the "White Horse of Kent with the motto 'Invicta' " to the Q.O.R.W. Kent, and the Fleur-de-Lys to the Manchester Regiment.

Two regiments of infantry have a third colour. The 2nd Duke of Wellington's received a 'standard of honour' from the East India Company for its long service in defence of the Company's territory. This standard was renewed, and officially sanctioned in 1886. The 2nd

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Seaforth Highlanders similar to the Buffs' permission to carry a third colour in commemoration of its gallantry under Sir Arthur Wellesley at Assaye.

The Brigade of Guards have colours all their own. The regiments have, first of all, a great 'State Colour' carried on great State occasions only. The King's Colours are of crimson. Those carried by 2nd Battalions are 'differenced' with a Union in the dexter corner, while those of the 3rd Battalions Grenadier and Coldstream Guards have a Union also, with "issuing in bend dexter a pile wavy or."

In the Brigade, furthermore, it is the Regimental and not the King's Colour which is of Union design. The Foot Guards have also the distinction—shared with the Household Cavalry—of carrying all their battle honours on both King's and Regimental Colours. In the centre of Regimental Colours of the Brigade is borne in rotation one of the old company badges, royal grants which are unique.

Rifle regiments have no colours at all. Although all infantry regiments now perform the same duties, the Rifles were originally intended for outpost and skirmishing work. There was, consequently, no place for their colours in the field. The battle honours of both English Rifle regiments are engraved on their cap badges. Each regiment wears a Maltese Cross, that of the 60th being black, against the polished badge of the

95th. An Army Order honours the 60th King's Royal Rifles have a long-standing grievance. Their 5th, green-jacketed, battalion fought all through the long Peninsular War as did the old 95th. When it was all over the authorities suddenly remembered that the 60th were really the 'Royal Americans.' Great Britain had, in 1812, embarked on a rather fruitless war with the United States, to which the 5/60th were dispatched as soon as the French had subsided.

Hardly were their backs turned before Napoleon was afoot again. Serious as the lack of so much of his 'old Peninsular infantry' was to the Duke of Wellington, it was even more serious in the eyes of the 60th that they should have missed the great culmination of Waterloo. The sight of the silver badge of the Rifle Brigade, proudly topped with the bold word 'WATERLOO,' is a perpetual reproach.

You must not, by the way, refer to the Rifle Brigade as a 'line' regiment. It is rather fond, paradoxically, of its old number 'Ninety-five,' but its members are quick to remind the offender that, in 1816, as a mark of approbation, the regiment was deliberately removed from the numbered regiments of the Line and given its present title. A new 95th was raised, and is now the 2nd Bn. Sherwood Foresters.

Nothing will arouse the ire of a cavalryman quicker than a reference to his 'colours.' In point of fact the majority of cavalry regiments

have no flag at all. Hussars and Lancers alike, making up as they do most of the cavalry of the Line, are light troops, like the rifles of the infantry. The change from Dragoons has been gradual, and, as they have been converted, the regiments have ceased to carry flags. Instead, their battle honours are borne on their drum banners.

Regiments of Dragoon Guards have each a 'standard,' an almost square flag much smaller than a 'colour.' Our only two remaining Dragoon regiments, the Royals and the Greys, carry the old swallow-tailed 'guidon.' Standards and guidons alike are crimson, with a union badge in the centre, and the White Horse of Hanover in the corners.

Household Cavalry regiments are unique again. They retain Regimental Standards after the old manner of the cavalry, one for each squadron, crimson, with the Union device, and their battle honours. Their Royal or King's Standards bear the Royal Arms of England and the honours. The Blues have an additional purely regimental standard bearing their own monogram. The Royal Standard of the Household Cavalry Regiment finding the escort is that carried behind the King's carriage on State occasions.

The Royal Horse Guards carried for long a special standard presented to them by King William IV on Queen Adelaide's birthday in 1832. It was borne for the last time when Queen Victoria returned from London to Windsor



after the celebration of her Golden Jubilee in 1887. To preserve the old standard application was made for the provision of a duplicate. It was then ruled, however, that the standard, being a personal gift from the Sovereign, could neither be maintained nor replaced at the public expense. It was consequently withdrawn from use.

Although treated with the same reverence as the colours of infantry, the cavalry standards or guidons are carried not by Second Lieutenants (Ensigns, please, in the Foot Guards) but by Sergeant-Majors. Not since Talavera, in 1809, have standards been carried to battle. They accompanied the old 23rd Light Dragoons in that battle, through the charge which gave respite to a sorely distressed infantry. It was only by superhuman valour that the standards were brought back safe to the British line. They are now preserved in the United Services Museum. Most cavalry regiments took their standards out for the Waterloo campaign, but left them 'lodged' at Ostend. Infantry colours were carried much longer on active service, nearly to the end of the nineteenth century.

History runs riot in the cap badges of the Army, in a way not reproduced in any other fighting force. You see them twinkling on a Saturday at Waterloo, when Aldershot disgorges its leave men. They catch gleaming light-spots on the field of a great tattoo, telling in a hundred designs

the Army's story, and the heraldry of its royal Master's House.

Some of the badges you have already met in these pages. The Pascal Lamb is Stuart, but the Dragon of the Buffs is Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's own badge, who first sent the Buffs out to fight for the Protestant cause. It is not to be confused with the dragon of the Berkshire Regiment, though even a naturalist could hardly tell them apart. The Berkshire Dragon came from China, one of a number granted to the regiments for the China War of 1840-42.

Hanover gave us her Electors to found a dynasty, and these same Electors, small men in many ways, played a large and not unworthy part in the history of their Army. In camp and barrack the 3rd King's Own Hussars are known as the 'Gallopers,' for across their caps gallops the White Horse of Hanover. A Queen came from Brunswick, and her Star twinkles at the brow of the Coldstream, though it has now been converted to the Star of the Garter. Formerly Guards and Royal Marines were known by the 'Brunswick Star.' Victoria the Good wedded a handsome Prince from Saxe Coburg. The first regiment to escort him in England received his castle badge and his motto, 'Treu und Fest.' From the 11th Light Dragoons it became the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own). The Green Howards, again, remember in badge and title Alexandra, that most gracious lady who came

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from Denmark to adorn our English Throne. The 33rd of Foot, the Duke of Wellington's, wears the blazon of its great Colonel.

The bugle horn, varied in some cases, is the mark of the Light Infantry Regiments. It was, actually, introduced by the Rifles, being the common means of signalling employed by their Jäger ancestors. The Rifle Brigade recalls a joyous incident at Peshawar in '97, where its old 3rd battalion found a Scots regiment in garrison. On the first night of the Rifles's arrival the Scots officers entertained the Greenjackets at Mess, eating dinner to the fearsome accompaniment of sixteen sets of war pipes. The invitation was returned. Round the table in the Rifles's Mess thirty-two bugles breathed defiance and struck the greatest blow for England since Flodden Field.

Battles great and small are remembered in a dozen scraps of brass. The Eagle of France spreads wings on the caps of the Greys and the collars of the Royals—cut and thrust at Waterloo. Castle and Key tell Suffolk and Dorset how their sons fought for the Rock under Elliott. Laurel wreaths repay the Borderers for Fontenoy and the Royal Marines for Belle Isle.

Over the star of the Royal Sussex waves a white plume, the Plume of Roussillon. It was that honourable old regiment that the 35th Foot met and defeated on the Plains of Abraham before Quebec. The Sussex has a more scandalous

memory. It is alleged that, when the regiment was in Brighton during the Regency, its officers were invited to dine with the Prince of Wales. How truly 'royal' the entertainment must have been may be judged from the fact that, when the toast of the King was called, the 35th officers were unable to stand to honour it. The Prince Regent laughingly decreed that the officers of the regiment should in future drink the toast seated, which they still do.

The bugle badge of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry has on its strings two feathers, which, in colour, are red. In service dress the men wear a red patch behind their badges, and, on foreign service, a red pagri. At Paoli in 1777, during the American Rebellion, a notably successful attack was made on the rebels by a detachment of Light troops which included the Light Company of the 46th. The Colonists swore to be avenged on the bodies of the 'Light Bobs,' who, in sheer bravado, dyed their white feathers red, so that they should not be mistaken. The Light Company of the 46th was the only one to retain the custom after the campaign, and eventually the red feathers were granted to the whole regiment.

The crossed carbines of the 6th Dragoon Guards, the Carabiniers, which still figure in the badge of the amalgamated 3rd Carabiniers, are as old as the battle of the Boyne, where the title was granted by King William III for the gallantry

displayed by the regiment. They were previously known as the 9th Horse, or the 'Queen Dowager's Cuirassiers.' The new title came from France, whose Carabiniers were world-famous. The French prototypes were swept away at the Revolution, but reconstituted under the Emperor, who classed them with his Cuirassiers, the terrific 'gilets de fer.' Though there are no longer Carabiniers in the French service, it is strange to note that there are two French units in Canada, styled the 'Carabiniers Mont-Royal' and the 'Carabiniers de Sherbrooke.'

The Sphinx badge was commonly granted to all regiments who fought in the Egyptian campaign of 1801, but not all of them have found room for it on their cap badges. The Dorsetshire Regiment wear it on the buttons, with the inscription 'Marabout,' they having been prominent in capturing the fort of that name at Alexandria.

Not all the cap badges are easy to explain or understand. The acorn and oak leaves of the 22nd Cheshires are usually said to have originated from the oak tree under which little George II sheltered after the battle of Dettingen. Since the 22nd took no part in that battle, being in Minorca at the time, the connection is a little hard to understand. Look close at the badge of the Northamptonshires and you will find at the base a tiny horseshoe. It is the famous shoe of the arms of Oakham. It tells that, prior to 1881,

the 2nd Battalion of the regiment was the 58th Rutlandshire Regiment of Foot.

To the casual observer the cap badge of the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards is that of the old 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. Yet the St. George's Cross has replaced that of the Order of St. Patrick. The old motto 'Quis Separabit' cannot be bettered for a happily amalgamated regiment, and stands. But the former date, 1788, commemorating the formation of the 4th into Dragoon Guards, has been replaced by 1922, all in Roman figures, being the year of the latest change.

Regiments have long memories for their comrades. A common method of marking army dates is by reference to the time "when we lay next the Buffs at Shorncliffe," or, "when the Dorsets relieved us at Festubert." Inter-regimental associations are kept up unfailingly throughout the years. The six 'Minden Regiments,' for instance, exchange telegrams of 'Minden Greetings' every year on the anniversary of that battle.

The origin of some of the associations between regiments has been lost in the mists of time. The Life Guards and the 14th/20th Hussars exchange telegrams each New Year's Day in honour of an old but unexplained alliance between the 2nd Life Guards and the 14th Hussars. An official extension of the cult may be found in the inclusion of certain territorial battalions in regiments whose depôts are not in their districts,

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and in the very many official 'alliances' between Colonial and 'Imperial' regiments.

Most of our regimental marches have their story. That of the Border Regiment combines their own original "John Peel" with the March of the French 34th whom they defeated in 1811. The tripping "I'm Ninety-five" of the Rifle Brigade was composed in the 'forties by Bandmaster Miller for a regimental concert. So popular a march did it become that the regiment had to seek an injunction from the War Office to protect their copyright from other corps.

When the Sherwood Foresters are on parade you will hear their band play "The Young May Moon." And why not? It was to that tune that the 45th arrived before the breach at Badajoz in 1812 after a long forced march.

The march with the most gallant history, surely, is that of the 14th West Yorkshire Regiment. The campaign of 1793 against the French Revolution was not a very glorious one. Then it was that

"The grand old Duke of York  
He had ten thousand men,  
He marched them up to the top of the hill  
And marched them down again."

At the sharp engagement of Famars things were not going too well for England and her Allies. The French were jubilant. Inflamed with the enthusiasm of the new Republic, flaunting defiance at all Europe, the ragged infantry surged forward,

their drums clamouring the revolutionary “Ça Ira” as they fought.

The colonel of the 14th swung round to his men. “Come on, boys,” he roared, “we’ll beat them to their own damned tune.” A dozen drummers thudded away, the fifes whistled bravely and the 14th moved irresistibly forward. No battle honour was granted for Famars, but the West Yorks still march past to the tune they won so honourably in the field.



CHAPTER VI  
BEAU ATKINS

CONTROVERSY rages fiercely over the uniforms in which the Army is next to fight. Long-suffering individuals of experimental units have been marched to and fro, photographed, and medically examined for their reactions to strange new garments.

There is an oft-told tale of how William the Conqueror, or Marlborough, or Wellington, or the Prince Consort had in front of him a soldier of the Life Guards, Foot Guards, Balloon Section or what not, and asked him how he would like to be dressed if he had to fight again at Hastings, Blenheim, Waterloo, or Inkerman. The answer alone is constant, "In my shirt-sleeves, sir." Perhaps, after all, the problem may solve itself literally in this way. Certain it is that on manœuvres or exercises units may be seen marching, happily enough, in that order of dress. After all, it is a simple solution. When it is hot, take the coats off; when it turns cold, put them on.

Little is new in an old Army like ours. Collars and ties? Well, we've had stocks and lace frills.

Sticklers for military etiquette stood aghast when the Connaught Rangers marched to the assault of Badajoz with bare necks. The Life Guards applied for a complete new issue of stocks after Waterloo, having thrown them away before the battle. Gaiters? Our men got varicose veins and the rheumatics a hundred and fifty years ago through wearing their spatterdashes too tight, and with the pipeclay wet on them.

Folk who struggle too hard to find the picturesque will tell you that the white spats of the Highlanders are worn in commemoration of their regimental ancestors, who, having worn out their shoes on the Retreat to Corunna, bound their feet with rags. Yet it is more feasible that the spats are, as their name indicates, but spatterdashes cut down to display the bare knees and coloured hose-tops of the Scots troops. Even in our present Service dress the Highlanders, when they wear them, cut their puttees short.

We are unfortunate in that no one, as has been so carefully done abroad, has written a book on uniforms. The subject is there. But even in a regiment, the origin of this or that article of dress is often obscure. The study is made more difficult by reason of the fact that the old prints on which the student must so often rely are frequently slipshod.

Why the red coat, the 'old red rag' of Britain? Loyal folk will tell you that it is the Royal livery of Stuart. True the Stuart colours were red

and yellow, the colours, indeed, ordained by Lord Cardwell for the Scottish regiments in 1881. The present uniform for 'Royal' regiments is, as has been said, red with blue facings. Yet the New Model Army that overthrew the Stuarts was, from its first raising at Windsor, predisposed towards that very colour of red, taking it, apparently, from the parent troops of the Eastern Counties Association, and from the livery of the House of Fairfax. Earlier yet the garrison of Calais and Henry VIII's troops on the field of the Cloth of Gold had worn the red coat.

The only necessity that was recognised in the days before standing armies was that opposing forces should be distinguished on the day of battle. Emblems were often adopted for the one occasion only—oak boughs perhaps, or scarves, or coloured plumes in hatbands. It is quaint to think that one such uniform consisted in the hanging out of shirt tails by men of a forlorn hope on a night attack, that their comrades might distinguish them from the rear. Indeed, such night attacks came to be known by the Spanish word for a shirt, 'camisado.'

Whatever the origin of the red coat, it was firmly established from the Restoration, though occasional troops would still be garbed in the livery colours of their colonel. The drummers of a regiment usually wore coats of the colour of the regimental facings. The most notable exception to the red coat was made by the Royal

Horse Guards, a regiment which has never been anything else but 'Blue' since its raising.

If pictures are not to be relied on always, very complete descriptions are available for some of the earlier uniforms. The Life Guard of Horse of King Charles II wore a low-crowned, broad-brimmed, pistol-proof helmet, adorned with a plume, worn either black or polished, with a hat of the Cavalier fashion for more peaceful occasions. The cuirass was worn over a scarlet coat, while the breeches were of buff leather. Boots were at first of buff, but later of stiff 'jacked' leather. All ranks wore a sash at the waist and fringed gauntlets.

Bright as the Army clothing of the Stuart and Marlborough periods was, yet, all allowances being made for the general dandiness of the period, it was both serviceable for war as then understood, and of suitable dignity for the parades of peace. Uniforms were, at all events, loosely made, so that a man might have liberty to wield his arms.

Throughout our military history the great armies of the Continent have served as dress models. Frederick the First of Prussia is accused of having first evolved the wondrous theory that a man, to fight, must be uncomfortable and tight-laced. The Prussian habit was quick to spread to England. So much were the uniforms tightened up that the reign of George II is known as that of the 'military tailor.'

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Hats, too, assumed monstrous proportions. Worn looped at the sides, then three-cornered, and finally 'cocked' back and front, the balancing of them, topped as they were by waving plumes, became a matter for the juggler. When they were wet they collapsed round the wearers' ears and made rain-water chutes on to the shoulders. You have heard, of course, that "our men swore terribly in Flanders."

Grenadier companies, having to sling their muskets over their heads while they flung their infernal machines, wore, from the early eighteenth century, a tall, mitre-shaped 'grenadier cap.' At first trimmed with fur, the cap gradually succumbed to the bearskin cap as known to-day in the Foot Guards.

Dragoons at first wore the cocked hat too, but the Light Dragoons, of which the 15th were the first formed in our service, adopted a black japanned, crested helmet, which was taken into wear by the Royal Horse Artillery also when that very dashing branch of a dashing arm came into existence.

The great consideration in the Frederickian school was that men should come magnificent to battle, however empty the stomachs might be beneath the tight coats. In the British service, indeed, it was customary for men to wear their coats inside out when not on ceremonial parade. It is remembered how, during the American War, a British cruiser passed a troopship in mid

Atlantic. The soldiers crowded the bulwarks to watch the man-o'-war sail by wearing the white linings of their coats outwards. Mistaking it for the white livery of the French House of Bourbon the cruiser opened fire on the unfortunate soldiers.

The Napoleonic era saw many changes in uniform. Our Rifle battalions were patterned on the German Jägers. Consequently they wore the huntsman's green jacket, an early attempt at protective colouring. There were already, before the Revolution, regiments of Hussars in the French service composed originally of Hungarian deserters. Napoleon made his Hussars famous, and several of our Light Dragoon regiments, from 1806 onwards, changed over to Hussars. Although they could have done the work equally well in their own uniforms, the dolman, frogged pelisse and busby were not to be resisted. So, indirectly, the feudal uniform of Hungary came to England.

Wellington's Peninsular Army was, on the whole, lucky. Various important changes of dress had been made before it landed, to its infinite advantage. The shako, in various shapes, had already appeared, almost completely ousting the cocked hat. The last recorded instance of its wearing by a combatant officer was at the storming of San Sebastian, where it was worn by Lieut. MacGuire of the 4th, the officer commanding the forlorn hope, who used it as a means

of distinction. The shako was first of felt and then of leather. While the heavy cavalry went out to Portugal in their new brass helmets, the light dragoons at first wore, in most regiments, a helmet of leather which, owing to its inferior quality, was soon battered out of all shape. These were later replaced by the black japanned helmet which had been the first mark of the arm, though in a somewhat different and more elegant pattern.

Before Vimeiro was fought the pigtail had been dispensed with, and those regiments that had not cut them off were shorn on landing by Wellesley's command. The very last exponent of the art in the infantry is said to have been Colonel Donellan, of the 48th, known affectionately as "Old Charlie, the last of the Powderers," killed at Talavera.

An art it was, this powdering. Old barracks, like gentry's houses, had their powdering rooms. That at Horse Guards has only just disappeared, having lingered for years as an N.C.O.s' room. An old soldier has described the powdering process as a painful one. "The Hair required to be soaped, floured and frizzed, in order to be tortured into an uncouth shape, which gave the man acute pain, and robbed him of the power of turning his head easily, unless he brought his body round with it." In other regiments the coiffure was worked up with the aid of rancid suet, whitening and meal.

One regiment remembers the pigtail in its uniform to-day. The 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers were in the Indies when the order was issued and were the very last regiment to crop their heads. Even in Service dress they retain the "flash" of black ribbon which was used to prevent the tunic from being soiled by the grease of the pigtail. The regiment resisted with success an attempt made to discontinue the wearing of the "flash" during the last war.

In the Life Guards the custom lingered even longer. The Court seemed unable to make up its mind. Successive orders were given abolishing the pigtail, re-introducing it first for non-commissioned officers, and finally for all ranks. Permission was given for men whose hair was insufficiently grown to wear dummy queues. On the way out to Portugal men evidently thought the opportunity had arisen to rid themselves of what must have become a nuisance. For, soon after the Household Cavalry Brigade landed in 1812, an order appears, "In consequence of certain men having cut off the tail part of their hair, the Commanding Officer directs a troop return to be made specifying the names of those men having cut off their hair, by whose orders, and by what authority, the date, and at what place done."

The Peninsular Infantry of Wellesley's command had also escaped from the purgatory of spatterdashes, wearing their trousers either loose



or strapped beneath the boots. First white, and then black, these many-buttoned atrocities had been a pest in peace and a positive danger in war.

Wellington, severe in many ways, was singularly lax in the matter of dress. Partly he was compelled to this attitude. The long line of sea communication with not only French but American ships to elude kept the Army short of many necessities, including stocks of clothing. It was compelled to cover its nakedness as best it might. One regiment was even seen marching in trousers cut by its own tailors from captured French blankets. It was not the first time that the French had, against their will, kept the British infantry decent. It is on record that the Guards came home from the Seven Years' War in breeches made from French tent canvas!

Wellington, in his own person, paid little attention to the niceties of military dress. He appeared often in civilian dress, and his favourite 'turn-out' was that of the Salisbury Hunt. His plain cocked hat, with waterproof cover, was adorned only with the small cockades of England and Portugal, to which he added, later, the colours of other nations that showered honours upon him. When it was a question of changing the pattern of the infantry shako his opinion was asked. His only concern was that he should be able readily to distinguish between his own men and the French, the bell-topped shako having

been his main means of recognising the enemy when he saw him.

"Provided," says Grattan of the 88th, "we brought our men into the field well appointed, with their sixty rounds of ammunition each, he never looked to see whether trousers were black, blue or grey: and, as to ourselves, we might be rigged out in any colour of the rainbow if we fancied it. The consequence was that scarcely any two officers were dressed alike. Some wore grey braided coats, others brown; some again liked blue; many (from choice or perhaps necessity) stuck to the 'old red rag.'"

There was a shortage of buttons in the Peninsula. The buttons of the Army of the day were leaden, and Wellington's men, their pay months in arrears, often hungry, would cut the buttons from their coats, hammer them flat, and foist them on the peasants as the currency of England.

Although many generals were meticulous in their appearance, and some of the regiments also, there is Kincaid's famous picture of 'Old Picton' at the Battle of Vittoria riding "at the head of his division, dressed in a blue coat and round hat, swearing as roundly all the way as if he had been wearing two cocked ones." Picton is said to have the excuse that his civilian hat was worn to shade his eyes, which were weak.

After the wars the military dandy really came into his own. Was not the Prince Regent, afterwards King George IV, the "First Gentle-

man in Europe"? England was full of visiting royalties and generals. For these 'Prinny' must be surrounded by brilliant uniforms. The "Men that beat Boney" must parade tricked out in all the finery that could be borrowed—in inspiration—from the military wardrobes of a continent.

In the *Gazette* of July 29th, 1815, there appeared the entry, "His Royal Highness has been pleased to approve of the First Regiment of Foot Guards being made a Regiment of Grenadiers, and styled the 'First or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards' in commemoration of their having defeated the Grenadiers of the French Imperial Guards upon that memorable occasion." With the title the Grenadiers took the great bearskin caps of Napoleon's Grenadiers, a fashion subsequently adopted by all regiments of Foot Guards.

The Household Cavalry, being always on show round the Court, underwent so many changes of appearance that a journalist of the day wrote: "Those Gallant Corps, who, in the acknowledgment of the whole Military World, on the plain of Waterloo decided the fate of Europe, have had, we understand, one allowance granted them lately, viz. that they are only to change their uniform four times a year.

"This arrangement seems to give universal satisfaction, even to the trade itself, as the Royal tailor has signified that, if more frequent changes

took place, he should not think himself quite so sure of being paid. Four times a year, therefore, these gallant Corps are to have an entire change which will be notified in Public Orders, that the Military World may know to what Regiment they belong, lest having seen them three months before in a uniform entirely different, they might mistake them for a different part of the Army."

One change affected the whole Army. A single-breasted coatee was substituted for the double-breasted one, in order, it is said, that the Waterloo medal might be properly displayed. This, issued in 1816, was the first medal ever issued to the Army in general. Previously, gold medals had been awarded to selected officers for specified engagements. Many such were issued for the Peninsular War. But not till the century was in mid-career were campaign medals issued to all the survivors of that war.

The most important change for the suffering Life Guards was the introduction or rather the re-introduction of the cuirass. These had been withdrawn from the heavy cavalry in 1698. Marlborough had, a few years later, paid his cavalry the supreme compliment of issuing breastplates only.

The re-issue to the Life Guards was made partly on account of the renown won by the French Cuirassiers, but more particularly to gratify the vanity of George IV. After an experimental appearance of a troop of the 2nd

Life Guards before the Emperor of Russia, the cuirasses appeared first on duty at a Carlton House Levee in 1821, a few days after the Coronation. One regiment actually took into wear the same cuirasses that had been laid aside in 1698.

Yet another French innovation followed Waterloo. Our military chiefs were greatly attracted by the power of the lance as wielded by Napoleon's Poles. The Lancers of the Vistula had first met British troops at Albuhera, in Spain, and to some effect. Since that time their fame had been much extolled, and both at Quatre Bras and at Waterloo the lance had been well in evidence. As certain of our light dragoons became Lancers they gained the plastroned tunic and the square-topped 'lance cap' which is their very effective full dress to-day.

The millinery of the army has always been its strong point, and even since George IV there have been more changes in this department of uniform than in anything else. The shako of the infantry (for some time regaining popularity in the light cavalry also) changed its shape many times, until by 1871 it had assumed something of the form worn until recently by our postmen.

In that year the shako disappeared, being ousted by the cloth-covered cork helmet which owed much to German influence. The few kilted regiments of the day kept their feather bonnets, and the Rifles their small astrakhan

busbies, while the Fusiliers had for some time worn racoon skin busbies of the same shape but much smaller than the caps of the Guards.

The general wear by the arm of the Fusilier cap hides the commemoration of a gallant fight by the Northumberland Fusiliers. In 1762 they gained the honour, unique among the infantry, of 'Wilhelmstahl,' where they took prisoner twice as many French grenadiers as their own strength. As a distinction they were allowed to adopt a grenadier cap, which was thus worn sixty years before they became a Fusilier regiment.

In some few instances regimental tradition again proved too strong for officialdom in the matter of the helmet. Between 1881 and 1914 there was a growing stream of denunciation of the helmet, closely identified as it was with the pickelhaube of the men we were destined to fight. Success in its abolition was only gained in the Lowlands of Scotland. The Royal Scots and the King's Own Scottish Borderers now wear the Kilmarnock bonnet, and the Scottish Rifles were, in 1914, the proud wearers of the only shako in the Army. Since the War, however, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry have also been granted the shako in full dress.

Although full dress is no longer in general use it is regarded as being in abeyance rather than abolished. Differences of uniform appear under regimental headings in the Army List, and orders of dress are still described in King's Regulations.

There have been two other alterations in head-dress since the War, or rather reversion. In 1914 all artillerymen outside the Horse Gunners, and the Sappers also, wore helmets of the ordinary pattern. In both cases these have now given way to the busbies which were the former head-dress of these arms.

By the amalgamations of cavalry regiments many of the old distinctions have had to disappear. The most distinctive uniform which thus ceased to be worn was that of the old Carabiniers, 6th Dragoon Guards. No regiment of Dragoon Guards had ever been to India, when in 1851 the 6th were warned for that service. It was decided to re-equip the regiment as light cavalry before it sailed, and it had accordingly adopted the blue tunic when the outbreak of the Crimean War caused it to be diverted for a time from the Far to the Near East. The new regiment of 3rd Carabiniers has as its full dress the red tunic and yellow velvet facings of the old 3rd Prince of Wales's Dragoon Guards. The distinctive mark of the 6th is retained only in the double white stripe of the pantaloons. So carefully was the old Army graded and dressed that heavy cavalrymen wore one stripe only on their breeches, while light horsemen had two.

There are distinctions too numerous to mention to be seen at every military show where full dress is worn. The red hackle of the Black Watch dates from the American Rebellion, the mourning

stripe of the Norfolk drummers recalls that they carried Moore to burial on the ramparts of Corunna. The Life Guards officers remember their Royal Founder in the oak leaf and acorn pattern of their lace, while their cloak collars are clasped with the double grenade of the old Horse Grenadiers. Somerset sergeants wear their sashes over the left shoulder as officers used to do. At Culloden it was that all the officers of the 13th were out of action, and the cry went up, "Carry on, Sergeant."

No troops are more confusing than the regiments of Foot Guards to the observer. The Grenadiers wear a white plume, the Coldstream red, the Scots none at all, the Irish light blue and the Welsh green and white. So far so good. But, put them into forage caps and it is found that the Grenadiers and Coldstreamers have perversely changed colours. The Scots cap bands are 'diced'; the Irishmen wear the green, and the Welsh Guards have embroidered black bands. Incidentally a pint of beer with an undue allowance of white froth is known in the Army as a 'Coldstreamer.'

The safest means of identifying a Foot Guard is by the spacing of his buttons. The Grenadiers wear theirs equally spaced, while the Coldstreamers have theirs in pairs. Those of the Scots are in threes, the Irish Guards in fours and the Welsh in fives.

It may not be amiss to include here a note on



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the badges of rank. In the eighteenth century commissioned and non-commissioned officers were distinguishable by various types of epaulettes and 'wings' and by the lacings of their coats. There were additional distinctions, of a very similar nature, for light and grenadier companies. So unsatisfactory and haphazard was the method that one officer captured by the French during a West Indies campaign early in the Revolutionary period, who happened to be wearing an old shabby coat, was confined throughout the whole war as a private soldier despite his protests.

A general order of 1800 prescribed that all field officers were to wear two epaulettes, and that a colonel was to have a star and a crown on the strap, a lieutenant-colonel a crown, and a major a star. Captains and subaltern officers wore a single epaulette on the right shoulder. The whole system was settled on the present basis in 1883, except that a captain wore two stars, a lieutenant one, and a second lieutenant none at all. The final increase in stars came in 1902.

There was a curious survival, down to 1830, of the only remaining armour of the British infantry. The gorget was originally that small plate of armour fitting over the cuirass for the protection of the neck. It outlived all other armour, being retained in the infantry by officers as a badge of rank and a signal that they were on duty.

Chevrons for non-commissioned officers were first introduced in 1803, sergeant-majors receiv-

ing four, sergeants three, and corporals two bars on the right arm. The distinctions to-day for N.C.O.s are too well known to need description. In the prevalent khaki clothing they are worn on both arms.

The Household Cavalry retain ranks and distinctions all their own, which are a puzzle to soldier and civilian alike. There were no non-commissioned officers in the Life Guards until 1756, when the grades of quartermaster and corporal of horse were introduced. When the regiments were organised in 1788, one quartermaster was allowed to each of the troops, he being a super-sergeant-major who purchased his warrant for £500 from his predecessor, in the same way that officers were required to purchase.

The ranks are now, lance-corporal, corporal, corporal of horse (equivalent to sergeant), squadron quartermaster corporal, squadron corporal-major and so on, substituting 'corporal' for the 'sergeant' of the Line.

In full dress, officers, warrant officers and N.C.O.s of the Household Cavalry wear aiguillettes—gold cords with shoulder-knots. Those of the officers (which are overlaid with the normal badges of rank) hang from the right shoulder as do those of officers of the Royal Household. The aiguillettes of N.C.O.s, following the example of Royal servants, are worn on the left. The aiguillettes are, therefore, a mark of the personal nature of the service which these troops perform

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to their Sovereign. Warrant officers and N.C.O.s wear no stripes or crowns on their full dress, which is, however, further differenced by various forms of lacing on collar, cuffs and skirt.

In undress uniform stripes are worn in the ordinary way, with the addition of a crown for all ranks. As the three stripes and a crown of the corporal of horse are worn in the rest of the Army by staff sergeants, the staff sergeants or squadron quartermaster corporals of Household Cavalry wear four stripes, inverted, with a crown, on the cuffs of their jackets.

There is no certain knowledge of the origin of the Household Cavalry crowns. It may be, however, that they were taken into wear on the assumption, shortly after Waterloo, of the Colonelcy-in-Chief of the Brigade by the Prince Regent. A letter from the dépôt in England to the detachment of the 1st Life Guards in Paris in 1815 states: "I have to inform you that Lord Harrington has ordered embroidered crowns to be worn above the corporal's bars (*i.e.* in undress), which when received will be forwarded to you without delay." The articles are further mentioned in an invoice of clothing as an "extra distinction."

The wearing of full-dress clothing on parade is now confined to the Guards, and even here the articles issued have been drastically reduced. Gone are the short 'stable jackets' of Life and Royal Horse Guards, and the white undress

jackets which formerly marked the Foot Guard taking the air. Yet the old uniforms retain a great hold in the Army, and full dress has crept in unofficially until hardly a regiment but can turn out a detachment in its own full dress. Tattoos and Tournaments have helped famously not only in providing the uniforms but in keeping alive the spirit that lies behind them, teaching the youngsters in what manner of dress were won the golden glories on the colours they follow. A coloured collar, a tuft of horsehair, or a button may be a possession fiercely guarded by a thousand men, telling a tale of duty nobly done, ensuring that those who come after shall do no less.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SCHOOL OF HISTORY

IN its method of fighting, its method of training to fight, as in all else, our Army has developed gradually. Often accused of being caught napping, or of being reactionary, it has more actually been loath to dash wildly after new gods until it has seen them very definitely proved.

Our military history started when war was a very dignified affair, waged between Prince and Prince, by armies of professional men, led by officers to whom gallantry was a code, who exercised their command by right of birth, handling sword and rein at an age which to-day is considered only to fit boys for a scholar's desk.

Warfare, when our Army was young, had rather declined from an art into a science. The highest point of achievement was the avoidance of battle. If an area of the enemy's country could be occupied by the out-manceuvring of his forces, all was exceedingly well. More especially was there a scramble for territory when the chilling air of the nights warned private and general of the oncoming winter. Occupied territory meant 'living at free quarters,' and the

relative positions of armies in the autumn meant good or bad quarters for the long hibernation of the winter.

But above all the Princes who indulged in wars of the seventeenth or early eighteenth century delighted in a siege. There would be the most meticulous marking out of trench lines, and parallels and battery positions, while assaults on bastions and demi-lunes and counter-scarps could be planned and carried out with all the precision of a State cotillion. The Court would anchor at a convenient range, the Royal opera company would announce its programme, and even the Royal seraglio unlimbered for amorous action.

Marlborough, of course, was a sad blow. Although by no means emancipated from the old school of thought, and having worse enemies in his own camp than outside it, his genius cropped up in a fashion distinctly disconcerting to the continental generals against whom he was matched. The success of Corporal John is easy to understand, seeing that it has been paralleled many times in history. Academic military thought, left to itself, has always settled down comfortably to a war of position in some form or other. With the utmost regularity the apostle of movement has burst forth and upset the complacency of the academicians.

Churchill was important to the British Army in two ways. His development of the cavalry arm forged a superb weapon which was without

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peer in Europe in his day. His internal economy taught British soldiers a lesson which even Napoleon missed.

Supply and transport were military subjects almost entirely unstudied abroad. Marlborough, eccentric as he must have been thought, arranged regular supplies of food, clothing and forage. He established boot depôts for his marching men and even contrived—unheard-of thing a hundred years later—that his men should be regularly paid. As a consequence he brought an army from the Low Countries to mid-Europe in such a state of equipment and clothing, to say nothing of discipline, that so tried a soldier as Prince Eugene was frankly amazed.

Under Churchill the Army cracked the skin of its chrysalis casing. His departure allowed it to slip back once more. The introduction of Prussianism under the Georges, as much as the intrigue which allowed the Army to become a political pawn, brought about a rapid degeneration. When, in 1740, the country plunged into the War of the Austrian Succession, the regulations simply did not exist for moving an expeditionary force to a theatre of war. Search had to be made in dusty files for the regulations of Marlborough's day, and his superannuated officers 'dug out' to put them into execution. Even so the very first boat-load to arrive at Ostend comprised the whole of the Army's women-folk, a very necessary adjunct to an army, but not for advance guard work.

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In one main respect did the British Army win fame in this campaign. At a time when fire-power was beginning fairly to make itself felt, the platoon firing of the British infantry both at Dettingen and Fontenoy taught the foreigners a new respect for the red-coats. Their steadiness at Fontenoy is proverbial, and you have heard how Lord Edward Hay, of the Guards, declaimed, "Gentlemen of the French Guard, fire first." It is a pity to shatter picturesque tradition, but there is reason to believe that the gentleman's actual remark was, "I hope you will stand to-day, and not escape by swimming the Scheldt, as you did by swimming the Main at Dettingen." As our men gazed down the French musket barrels a tall grenadier in the front rank murmured, "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful."

Nevertheless, in spite of fire-discipline and downright gallantry, it was a stiff-backed, futile army. No less futile, true, than those it fought, and attended, usually, by its own particular good fortune. Quebec and Minden and Gibraltar bear witness to that.

Perhaps the most important episode of the Seven Years' War, our next appearance on the Continent, was the raising by Elliott of the 15th Light Dragoons in 1759. In Germany, when but a few months old, the 15th gained a niche all their own at Emsdorff, the first battle honour ever authorised to be worn on standards. Further, Elliott's were authorised to bear inscribed on



their helmet plates, "Five Battalions of French defeated and taken by this Regiment, with their Colours and nine pieces of cannon on the Plain of Emsdorff, July the Sixteenth 1760."

Although they were very far from being light cavalry in the modern acceptance of the word, the brilliant success of Elliott's in their first campaign caused even the last-ditchers to spare a kindly word for the innovation and had a great bearing on the loosening of cavalry training in general. Clad at first in traditional red, the 15th achieved, in 1785, the blue jacket which was to be the outward and visible sign of the Light Dragoon.

Whatever faults our Army possessed it was ever neatly docketed and pigeon-holed. Enemies and friends could distinguish at a glance between arms and branches. Even within the confines of a unit, grenadier and light companies could be singled out from plain battalion companies.

It was left to the American rebels to teach the professional army a sharp lesson which was to be repeated—to our ultimate salvation—a century and more later by the gentle Boer. Against the lightly equipped, loosely trained colonist, super-shot and mercurial as he was, perfectly trained parade troops were severely handicapped by their very steadiness. That they were so near success was due to their own devoted discipline and the lack of it on the other side.

There grew up in the Army, during the American War, a new school of thought, de-

nounced, of course, as dangerous, especially by the arm-chair critics at home. The new fanatics, being on the spot, with dilemmas distracting their superiors at every turn, had not a little of their own way. Simcoe, Ferguson and Tarleton are recorded among those who adopted with much success, and under proper discipline, the guerilla tactics of the rebels.

They brought their ideas back to England at the conclusion of hostilities, and the Army was immediately divided into two camps. The fighting battalions came home with their tails down, it is true, but with their souls purged of the old precision of Dettingen and Minden, admirable in its day, but dangerously out-of-date and creaking in its joints. They were fighting in two ranks instead of three, and a looseness of manœuvre was developing which was to serve them in good stead when facing the troops of the coming master-mind.

Unfortunately they had lost a war, and their views were consequently not seen with an unprejudiced eye by the powers. The man who had the ear of the authorities of the moment was Colonel David Dundas. A good sound man was Dundas, and an earnest one. He had tramped from Edinburgh to Woolwich for his first appointment as 'fire-worker' in the Artillery. A little unfortunately, perhaps, he had attended the last great manœuvres of Frederick the Great in 1785. He had seen the beautiful parade movements of

horse and foot in which Prussia has never been surpassed. Cornwallis, also present, fresh from America, was moved to remark, "Two lines coming up within six yards of one another and firing until they have no ammunition left; nothing could be more ridiculous."

Dundas, however, was the successful theorist, and ousted the defeated practitioners. The old formations, well stiffened with ideas culled at Potsdam, were incorporated in the large quarto volume which was, for better or worse, our first drill book. This, at any rate, was something, for, prior to its issue, commanding officers had drilled and manœuvred their regiments pretty much as they liked. As Sir John Moore remarked to the author, "That book of yours has done a great deal of good, and would be of great good were it not for those damned eighteen manœuvres." "Why—aye," growled the Scots soldier, "blockheads don't understand."

His critic was destined to make, and had, when the conversation took place, already made revolution in the Army.

The 5th Rifle Battalion of the 60th, and the Experimental Rifle Corps which became the 95th Rifles, were already formed when, in 1801, Sir John Moore was allowed to start work at Shorncliffe Camp. He had under him for instructional purposes the 4th, 43rd and 52nd Foot, the 95th Rifles and the 14th Light Dragoons. Here was the forerunner of the Light Division

which was to gain such renown as to earn the all-sufficient sobriquet, in the Peninsula, of 'The Division.'

Denounced though it was by the old school, the advantages of the Light Infantry system were made so obvious that both 43rd and 52nd were officially constituted Light Infantry Regiments in 1803. Together they are now the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry.

Moore was not to see the full vindication of his enterprise. Wellington had early proof that the new Light Troops were 'out for business.' Training, inspiration of special duty, and the driving power of a super-keen general were behind the famous march of the Light Brigade to the battle-field of Talavera: 43rd, 52nd and 95th marched nearly fifty miles in twenty-five hours with full packs and under a broiling Spanish sun, and, what was more, took over the outpost line on their arrival.

Wellington, unjustly, is often denied credit for his 'Q' work. So far from neglecting it the 'Sepoy General' was fully alive to the importance of Supply and Transport. "Rice and bullocks" was his theme song. The sufferings of his Army in Spain through lack of essentials, and its consequent, if spasmodic, breaches of discipline, must be laid entirely at the door of the Home authorities. Yet even at its worst the British Army was in a far superior position to the French.

Napoleon had one false principle in war—

“Scatter to forage, concentrate to fight.” On that he fell. If he had learned, as Wellington had, the elementary facts that had been so well and truly practised by Marlborough there would have been no retreat from Moscow, possibly no ‘Spanish Ulcer.’ Badly as supplies failed on occasion in the Peninsula with the British Army, the position would have been infinitely worse had not the Commander-in-Chief been prompt to reach the limit of his patience.

In the field the British victories were mainly that of the line over the column, although the column of the French Army was not nearly so definitely formed as is usually imagined. Wellingtonian tactics were clear cut, owing something to the ‘oblique attack’ of Frederick the Great. Wellington’s ideal position in which to fight was that of Salamanca or Waterloo, where he could keep his infantry more or less under cover until the vital moment.

The Duke’s overwhelming success against Napoleon was to have the entirely unforeseen result of slowing up progress for many years in the British Army. He was recognised, not only at home but throughout the Continent, as the greatest soldier of the day, and whether he was Commander-in-Chief or Prime Minister there was literally no move made in British military circles without his approval.

Waterloo behind him, the Duke steadfastly refused to admit that the conditions of armies in

the field could be better than that of the Army which he had used so gloriously. It is he, surprisingly enough, who must take a large proportion of the blame due for the state in which the Army went to the Crimea. But if, under his influence, regiments entered that campaign in the same state of training and even, in some cases, with arms identical with those of Waterloo, the Duke would not, one may feel sure, have been any sort of party to the miserable interior economy of the force which brought about so much suffering and loss. There would have been a very healthy hanging of commissaries and slanging of departmental officials.

The Crimean War, dangerously uncomfortable as it proved to the miserable participants, wrought untold good, to the benefit of the soldier of to-day. Hospital, Ordnance, Supply and Transport Departments may all date their rise to efficiency from the fiasco of that campaign.

It is comforting to be able to reflect that the post-Crimean period was the last of the ruts into which the Army was allowed to fall. Even that was relieved by the great administrative reforms. The disasters of the first Boer War did not shake our complacency to any great extent. The success of various expeditions against hordes of savages demonstrated the personal gallantry of all ranks—which had never been in question—and persuaded military and civilian leaders alike that all was for the best. We have to give credit

for the introduction of the Cardwell Scheme, but in most other respects the Army was very much behind the times when it embarked for the second Boer War.

Our military history has been remarkable for the private enterprise of devoted officers, and what improvements there were in the second half of the nineteenth century were to a very large extent due to individuals who saw, however dimly, through the glass into the future. We may recall, for instance, the strivings of such officers as Keith Fraser and Lord Dundonald in the Household Cavalry.

When the latter took over command of the 2nd Life Guards in 1895 it was considered almost superfluous to exercise heavy cavalry in musketry. Lord Dundonald, among many other innovations, contrived, at a monthly expense to the officers of the regiment of £55, to send fourteen men each day for five days a week to practise musketry at Bisley.

The old 'pigeon-hole' system was dangerously complete. It was considered more essential that Light Infantry should march past at "a hundred and forty to the minute" than that ordinary Foot should learn something of the true principles of modern manœuvre and open warfare. So carefully was the cavalry arm graduated that a member could gravely announce to a thrilled House of Commons the respective weights, on the hoof so to speak, of Household, Heavy, Intermediate and Light Cavalry.

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The debt we owe to Boer farmers is of the heaviest, and widely appreciated, in military circles at all events. It was the final lesson. Here, once and for all, every man was made to realise the importance of his own intelligent co-operation, and the Army finally shook itself free from the stiffness of the Frederickan school.

The British Expeditionary Force, as it assembled in 1914, was surely the most perfect battle organisation, for its size, that ever took the field. Superior to any machine, it had a living, pulsating soul. Nurtured in the best insular traditions, every man was happily aware that one Englishman was worth two foreigners and every British soldier worth two ordinary Englishmen. He had a contempt for Germany that was, as a matter of fact, entirely unwarranted, but which stood the country in the greatest stead.

The regiments were superb. Reservist-leavened battalions swarmed from Southampton; sun-tanned warriors turned their backs joyously on the outposts of India. Honest-to-goodness militia-men raged in their dépôts till German shells tore gaps for them to fill in France. The home-defence Territorials volunteered almost to a man for service overseas. It was the supreme vindication of two and a half centuries of history.

Where do we stand to-day? Who shall say? One thing is certain. There is this time no rut. As far as the military mind can see, all eventualities are prepared for. Critics have easy work,



since they may confine themselves to the destructive, and so earn their bread-and-butter. If one might venture, very humbly, to suggest—there is no study that repays so much as that of history, in no matter what subject.

Thousands of years of war point out that, however much conditions change, the broad principles of the art of war remain constant. The general of movement has always triumphed over the man of position. Perhaps, therefore, we are not so very far wrong in striving for mobility while keeping a useful and warning skeleton at the feast by bending our backs frequently to the ignoble work of the spade.

## CHAPTER VIII

### STILL AT SCHOOL

No man works so hard in the estimation of his fellows as in his own opinion. It is the frequently expressed opinion of the civilian that the soldier has a very idle time. He emerges, so it is thought, for a few weeks once a year for what are vaguely, but mainly incorrectly, known as 'manœuvres.'

Much of this misjudgment is due to the fact that a great deal of the army man's work is either done in camera, behind barrack gates, or under the guise of play. So much of army training appears as a sport. Of manœuvres the average civilian sees no more than a few idyllic newspaper pictures, or perhaps a few laughing youngsters eating bread and cheese in sylvan surroundings.

Actually the scheme of army training is worked out to spread pretty completely round eleven of the twelve months. Military men have to contend with several varieties of year. There is first the normal calendar year, accompanied by wassail and headaches. There is the financial year, commencing on April 1st, entailing a vast balancing of ledgers, which happens to coincide

with the military law that makes every horse gain a year in age. There is, last of all, the 'training year,' which starts on October 1st.

The selection of this date is governed by two facts. All higher formation training is completed in September, its own commencement, in turn, having been governed by the purely civilian harvest. Second, because it sees the commencement of the trooping season, when the oceans swirl and railway systems throb under the moving battalions.

But before dealing with the training of units it is well to examine for a moment the *depôt* system. With two classes of exceptions every infantry regiment and all corps have their own *depôts*. The exceptions are the Foot Guards, who combine in the super-*depôt* at Caterham, and the two English Rifle Regiments, which share the Rifle *depôt* at Winchester.

To the *depôts* are sent all recruits as they join. Most *depôts*, incidentally, include a recruiting office. At the *depôt* men are squadded, about thirty together. Remaining thus during the thirteen weeks of their recruit training, they are infused immediately with the team spirit. Most regiments name their squads, either after their battle honours or their famous men.

*Depôts*, being fixtures, are the most comfortable of barracks. Carefully handled by selected N.C.O.s and old soldiers of their own regiment, recruits receive an intensive training in all

elementary branches of their new profession, and are imbued above all with the dignity, gallantry and tradition of the corps.

They go forth eventually to their home battalion vastly different youngsters from the shapeless, rather timid youths they were when they slipped in at the gates.

For cavalymen there now is no *depôt*. Cavalry recruits are sent direct to a regiment on the home establishment and, when trained, drafted abroad as necessary. Such transfers are voluntary, so far as is possible. The Household Cavalry, being peculiar people, have never had a *depôt*. Always they have trained their own recruits.

The two largest *depôts* are those of the Gunners at Woolwich and the Sappers at Chatham. Each of these great branches of the Service is by way of being self-contained. They make little call on the services of the rest of the Army in their training, though, when one thinks back, they were trying enough in their demands for fatigue parties during the War.

Woolwich has always been the home of the Gunners, and their establishments include the *depôt* proper, which is mainly concerned with the drafting question, the two Training Brigades, the Military College of Science—which they allow other people to share—and the ‘Shop’ itself, which turns out the Gunner and Sapper officers.

The Sappers are thoroughly happy at Chatham, with its old fortifications peculiarly adapted to

their needs. They have their mamelons and their ravelins, bridges and pontoons, and even a 'Captain of the Cutter.' The Royal Engineers, whose history I cannot give here, have fathered several other branches. The Royal Air Force started life as the Balloon Section of the R.E. The Royal Corps of Signals was their War baby. They had a hand in the Royal Tank Corps before it was a separate entity. They even, as Submarine Miners, toyed with the torpedo before they gave it away to the Navy.

Generals, like the editors of Christmas Annuals, think well ahead. When the troops are enjoying, light-hearted, the pleasures of summer suns, or equally possibly cursing the rains, staffs are struggling with the Winter Training programmes.

Briefly, Winter Training puts all soldiers back to the recruit stage. There will be a painful month while N.C.O.s are 'set up' and lectured and given tests. Each squadron or company follows on with a month of individual training which not only re-trains the private man, but gives higher ranks the chance to put their own re-furbished knowledge into action.

The pill of individual training is gilded with the glamorous period of annual furlough. A month's holiday on full pay seems a generous allowance to the ordinary mortal. It must be remembered that, even when on Home service, the soldier is more often than not out of normal reach of his home, and that furlough gives him an opportunity

which is denied for the rest of the year. Furthermore, almost every soldier will have, during his soldiering, a period of years when much salt water will separate him from 'Blighty.'

Winter Training is supervised by Commands. By them it is interspersed with instructional visits, tactical exercises without troops, and the like. Regiments and battalions are made responsible for holding 'organised discussions,' campaigns are set for study by officers, and such abstruse subjects as military law are made a little clearer.

Winter Training over, each unit must prepare for a great annual spring-clean, in every sense of the word, which culminates in General's Inspection. Nothing could be more thorough than this inspection. Starting with a formal parade, the inspecting officer proceeds to inspect various 'orders' of dress, to set up an inquisition into interior economy, supervise, indeed, a perturbing but wholesome upheaval. It culminates in a huge sigh of relief when the bugle sounds first a General Salute as the staff car leaves barracks, and next, in joyful antiphon, the 'Dismiss.'

There is no rest in sight, for 'Musketry'—'Weapon Training' to the precisely minded—lurks round the corner. Musketry means much in an Army whose principal fame has rested upon it for centuries. It begins with the sharp familiar rap of "On the command—'Standing, Load' " and ends in much breath-holding effort and the retention of proficiency pay by the skilful. Fortu-

nate indeed the new soldier is. Even if he does fail ignobly at the ranges he only stands liable to forfeit threepence a day. His predecessor lost a whole sixpence.

Collateral with all this excitement runs specialist training. Specialists are a caste within a caste. Machine-gunners, signallers, and even stretcher-bearers will retire into odd corners of barracks and practise their dread mysteries. The ordinary reader, like the ordinary soldier, must be content to leave them to it.

At last, sound in wind and limb, his 'eye in' and his mind alert, the soldier marches forth to mimic war. He is not, at first, trusted with anything real-sized. There will not even be an enemy. But gradually, step by step, he wins his way from imaginary enemies to brushes with other companies. Now colonel will indulge in private feud with colonel. He may even wheedle a battery of guns, and perhaps a genuine aeroplane. Across the old war areas of Hants and Wilts sturdy little men of the R.E. will be plumbing and navvying. White tents will flower where grass waved before. The troops move out for higher formation training, culminating, somewhere in late September, in divisional or inter-divisional training. The cycle is complete, and the Winter Training programme is again ready on orderly-room desks.

In pre-War days, money being plentiful, every year saw its 'Grand Manœuvres.' Every avail-

able unit was swept up and translated to the selected area, to the delight of the rustic maidens and the dark-browed mutterings of their swains. A very gallant business, and a healthy one.

They formed high spots of military life, something for old soldiers to yarn about. You may hear to-day of the Sussex or the Cambridge or the 'Cavalry' Manœuvres. They swam rivers and marched for days, and occasionally managed a real fight, where men got hurt. Glorious times. We can't afford them any more.

At the back of the whole system of Army training, at least where individual training is concerned, is the great chain of army schools. Turn to the heading of the Army List of "Establishments, I, Educational and Training" and you may read what various subjects in his own trade the soldier may study. He may learn to chase the all-pervading rissole in its frying-pan at the School of Cookery or to 'swat' the fly that settles on it at the Army School of Hygiene. There are solemn establishments for the encouragement of signallers, schoolmasters and saxophone players.

Young boys may study surveying with the R.E.s at Chatham, boot-making at the Army Technical School, or the correct manipulation of army forms with the Royal Army Service Corps at Aldershot. We are no longer shackled in the Army by red tape, by the way. It is white now, and little used at that.



## *SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER*

Pride of place among schools must be given to the Small Arms School, divided into its three wings of Hythe, Netheravon (M.G.) and Anti-Gas, all of them duplicated again in India. To one of the first two branches, either at home or in India, every combatant sergeant must go. More usually it is to Hythe or Pachmari. It is from these that instruction in the use of the almighty rifle is supervised.

The old School of Musketry was very suitably located at Hythe. It was here that the Rifle Brigade spent many of its early days. It is typical of our Army that, whereas the rifle has a history of a hundred and thirty odd years, it is still normal to speak of 'musketry' though the swan song of the musket was sung at Waterloo. Similarly, it is with the greatest difficulty that men are brought to consider the 'Small Arms School.'

There is a cosmopolitan atmosphere about Hythe, more than in the rest of the Schools. It is a sort of 'Grand Hotel' for the soldier. It is possible, at Hythe, to be awakened in the middle of the night by a dumping of kit-bags and the sound of querulous voices asking for empty beds. The invariable Army question will be growled out from a creaking bed:

"What mob, mate? "

"East Yorks."

"Where from? "

"Shanghai,"—just like that, as a mortal man

might say "Tooting." There was also the sergeant-major who arrived unheralded and uninvited from Singapore. Some erring clerk had miscast him as a gate-crasher, and he had *almost* had to take the next boat back.

All-important to the mounted arm is the School of Equitation at Weedon, Northants. Here, in the barracks which were attached to George III's place of retreat in the case of a French invasion, Cavalry and Artillery officers and N.C.O.s are instructed in the whole theory and practice of the Riding School. Instruction is regularised and improved, horse-breakers are trained, in themselves training the future chargers of the Army.

It is curious to reflect that, in 1780, only two regiments of cavalry had riding schools, the Blues and the Bays. Their existence was due entirely to private enterprise. That of the Blues was built at Nottingham in 1772, and recommended as a pattern to other regiments by an inspecting officer. Even after Waterloo we find the Household Cavalry regiments in London still compelled to avail themselves of private facilities at Pimlico, where a Colonel Peters had opened 'The Queen's Riding School.'

There was, incidentally, a sad blotch on an otherwise noble escutcheon. Queen Caroline was on one occasion forced to send word to her coachman that he must drive more slowly, as two of the Lifeguardsmen of her escort had that

morning tumbled from the grace of their saddles.

The first official 'Riding House' for the instruction of Rough Riders seems to have been located in the present Royal Horse Artillery Barracks at St. John's Wood. It was later transferred to Canterbury, whence, as the Cavalry School, it was removed to Netheravon in 1904. In 1922, when the reorganisation of the cavalry took place, cavalrymen gave way to machine-gunners at Netheravon, and an Equitation School was opened at Weedon for the joint benefit of Cavalry and Artillery.

The early lack of instruction may have been partly due to the fact that good yeoman stock was available for the recruiting of the mounted arm, and that such men were used to the saddle. But that the performances of the troopers left much to be desired may be judged from the fact that Le Marchant, the first Commandant of the R.M.C., was compelled, in his regimental days, to set himself to deal with the bad swordsmanship of his men. His, and most other troopers, were so little masters of the essential arm that they were very apt to slice their mounts about the head and neck when performing the sword exercise.

Another very famous military school had a strange origin. At Scutari, in 1854, the British Army of the Crimea paraded in honour of Queen Victoria's Birthday before the Duke of Cambridge.

### STILL AT SCHOOL

The turn-out was in the best tradition, full marks were allowed for pace and action. Even the foreign attachés purred approval. Then the bands crashed out into the National Anthem—and the Army stood disgraced. Each and every band had its own arrangement—most their own private key.

Hardly had the fog of war cleared when the order went forth, “The proposal of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief to establish a School of Music having received the support of all officers Commanding Regiments, measures will be adopted without delay to place the School in working order.”

So on January 1st, 1857, where Sir Godfrey Kneller once had his home, was born the Royal Military School of Music. Not only can our Army Bands now play the ‘National Anthem’ consistently well, but the marching regiments and general public alike derive benefit and pleasure from the training our musicians receive.

Soldiers being what they are, you will not be surprised that many are the complaints levelled against all and sundry Schools of Instruction.

“It is all very well,” you hear, “but we can’t carry on like that when we get back to the ‘batt.’” Perfectly true. A battalion, or a regiment, bird of passage that it is, has neither appliances nor time to carry out this or that course of instruction in all its perfection. It is to be presumed that officers and men who staff

the Schools, coming from working regiments, selected, moreover, for a certain intelligence, are perfectly well aware of this. Schools are idealised, and have every facility. They do attempt, and most certainly succeed, in sending out to the fighting units a steady stream of up-to-date instructors, qualified to teach on a standardised system; which they can adapt to the possibilities of their units. There is, besides, the fact that, however badly they are situated, regiments have found themselves able to improve their instruction in certain directions almost to School standards. One has only to compare the bare, whitewashed miniature ranges which were considered all that was possible in pre-War barracks, with the completely furnished ranges that are in existence in most barracks to-day, with rifle trenches, moving targets and built-up landscapes.

It is hard to think of a department which cannot show improvement since 1914. If that superb infantry was able to persuade Germany that it was completely equipped with machine-guns because of the way in which it handled its rifles, the young troops of the present day are even better equipped to create the same illusion, even if the need is not so acute. The sharp-eyed youngsters behind the machine-guns themselves would compare very favourably with machine-gun officers of pre-War days.

In the Riding School, again, the old 'Rough Rider,' whose instructional ability was mainly

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confined to the use of whip and invective, has been swept away. In his place is the Riding Instructor, not only able to perform marvels of horsemanship himself, but, what is much more important, able to communicate his knowledge to the men in the ranks. His work is evident in the arena at Olympia, and in every show ring and display ground in the country.

We are apt to consider the new Army very young and unfledged. Perhaps the fault is in ourselves, for growing old. It is odd to think that, if war broke out to-morrow, these very youngsters would be regarded as veterans next week.

The old guard may rest assured that they would have nothing to blush for in the behaviour, gallantry, or military efficiency of their successors. They have handed on the torch and it has grown not a whit dimmer, even if progress has demanded that the brave flicker of tow and naphtha should be replaced by the white glare of electricity.

## CHAPTER IX

### PAST—PRESENT—FUTURE

“GOOD-BYE, Atkins—and good luck.” A handshake across a table, and Thomas Atkins, yesterday a ‘trooper of the forces,’ stands at the barrack gate—a ‘civvy.’

Bewildering outlook. For seven years he has been fathered and uncled. Food, clothing, house, sports, medical attendance—every need has been anticipated. He left the civilian world a boy of eighteen. He returns a grown man, fit and alert, well-disciplined—and then what?

He will have every assistance in finding work. Each regiment has its Old Comrades’ Association, and some branches, like the Brigade of Guards and the Cavalry, a separate Employment Society. There is, above all, the long-named but hard-working National Association for Employment of Regular Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, with its branch in every garrison.

But it is during his actual service that the soldier must be fitted for his after life. From the day of enlistment he is regarded, not merely as an army recruit, but as a citizen in the making. Not so many years ago arose in every barracks the

cry "You're not paid to think." To-day 'THINK' has almost been adopted as the Army's motto.

Down at Shorncliffe is the 'Brain Factory,' officially known as the Army School of Education. It is the training centre of the Army Educational Corps and of regimental school sergeants. Recruits who have only recently flung school caps over the moon realise with a shock that the 'School' bugle sounds every day in the Army.

There are four certificates of education. The Third Class is preliminary, and may be jumped by the intelligent. The Second is a peril, for on it depends the trained soldier's rate of pay, and his corporal's stripes. Holders of the First Class are entitled to strut, and may alone aspire to warrant rank. Towering above all is the 'Special.' It is recognised by most universities as the equivalent of their 'Matric,' and accepted by several of the Institutes in place of their own entrance examination.

School is rarely popular, in the Army or out of it. It is here, however, that the soldier receives the first lead over his civilian brother.

After six years the recruit is a fighting man, trained to the last hair. The Army can safely begin to relax its hold. In its official handbook, the *Guide to Civil Employment*, the War Office gives details of many branches of public and private employment open to the ex-service man. It even gives tempting instructions on how to enter the Royal Mint.



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Ready to the soldier's hand also is the prospectus of the Army Vocational Training Centres. If he had a trade before joining up, it was probably a half-learned if not actually uncongenial trade. Now, at one of the three Centres—Aldershot, Hounslow or Chisledon—he may spend the last six months of his soldiering in learning almost any trade he chooses. The hidden mysteries of every shade of the building trades are laid bare. Soldier craftsmen work to the designs of soldier draughtsmen and to the estimates of soldier architects and builders' clerks. His building can be furnished with army-made furniture. The embryo farmer meets military pigs and chickens and cattle. He may dig his novice spade in Army gardens or discuss with experts the 'fly on the turmut.' He may practise to become the perfect 'gentleman's gentleman' or breed familiar contempt with the inside of a motor-car.

Six months is not long in which to train first-class tradesmen. But the Centres, by organised method and under expert civilian instructors, turn out "well-trained men who have the ability to use their tools and can do the work as well as the average mechanic," though sometimes lacking in experience and speed.

Keenness is the key-note of vocational training. Not every soldier can gain admission to a Centre. Four questions are asked. Does he deserve help? Is he determined? Is he intelligent? Can he

prove the probability of success? He must also pay a weekly sum, according to rank, towards the cost of instruction.

And the consequence? The Army is able to provide a fit man of good character: a man who has chosen and paid for his trade: a man trained by experts. In the year ending September 30th, 1932, 2203 N.C.O.s and men passed through the Centres. Of these nearly 80 per cent. found immediate employment in the trades for which they had been trained.

Private Atkins enters, shall we say, the Aldershot Centre a soldier complete. He has in addition a two-foot rule and a book of instructions. Under his khaki he has stored the energy without which "no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities will make a two-legged animal a man."

The Centre thrives on slogans. "Success comes in 'Cans'"—"Good enough is not Enough"—above all 'THINK' stares from every wall. The workshops are models. Chiefest pride of all, at Aldershot, is the Training Tower. Thirty-three feet higher than Nelson's Column, it is the builders' paradise. Pipes may burst to their hearts' content—sure of being plumbed with alacrity. The Tower is wired and rewired; its fireplaces and decorations change every day. The students are available for any job of work in the Army that will offer them training. Sports pavilions or garages, window-boxes for the

sergeant's geraniums, ponds for the colonel's gold-fish—it is all one to the A.V.T.C.

“The only thing that comes to him who waits”—another Centre slogan—“is whiskers.” Students go out to meet criticism. In the slightly foreign atmosphere of the Aldershot Horse Show the Centre's exhibits are the awe of all beholders. At a recent Building Trades Exhibition at Olympia the soldier apprentices carried off from similar schools first prizes for the best stand, the best piece of sanitary work, the best plumbing exhibit (second and third as well) and a ‘second’ for the best piece of finished brickwork.

In *Links* the Centre publishes Britain's most go-ahead journal. The Leg Theory of the A.V.T.C. is the ‘Leg up.’ *Links* has its tail up as well. Brimful of determination and optimism, it shatters the depression and preaches persistence, “the quality that will help you to pick up a sixpence in the streets of Aberdeen.”

In considering the future of the soldier a gratifying glimpse may be taken at that old-established home of the old soldier, the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. One might be tempted to call it the Temple of Youth. You know, of course, that old soldiers never die. Here you must search hard for any signs of ‘fading away’ even.

It is admitted at Chelsea that skittishness is the main trouble. Pensioners are admitted at the

tender age of fifty-five. But boys of fifty-five are up to all manner of mischief and need a deal of watching.

Hear the tale of old Jack, a recruit of ninety-one. The Sergeant-Major, a beardless boy of forty-five or thereabouts, went out to meet the taxi when 'Old Jack' arrived. He opened the door.

"Hullo, Jack," he said, extending a welcoming and assisting hand. "Can you climb out?"

"Climb out?" sneered Jack. "Stand back, Sir," and he jumped clear to the pavement.

William Hiseland holds the Royal Hospital record. Married for the second time as he reached his century, he eventually attended his final Muster in 1732, at the age of 112. His portrait is at Chelsea in his 110th year, in all the glory of scarlet coat and broadsword.

The Hospital buildings stand on ground said to have been obtained through the agency of Nell Gwynne. Tradition, indeed, maintains that the whole idea was evolved by that frail but fascinating little lady. Stolid historians have their doubts, but they are over-fond of cavilling at our sweetest traditions. What good would London not believe of its own Nelly?

Charles II, in founding the Hospital, frankly copied Louis XIV of France who, in 1679, had built the 'Invalides' for his broken soldiers. The warrant of Chelsea bears date 1681. The

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R.S.M. has his own description of the raising of money.

"The Paymaster-General, old Fox," he declared, "tapped the Army Funds, gave a good deal himself; the King put down about £7,000 he had up his sleeve, and there they were." The Hospital was built, endowed, and put in good running order.

Go down to Chelsea some day. It stands open, and is worth seeing for the peace of your soul and the enchantment of your eyes. Its beauty we owe to Sir Christopher Wren. There is a quiet warmth on the buildings. The oaken solidity of the interior is as British as the men it houses. A very worthy shrine of valour.

Subsequent bequests have warranted extensions of the earlier scheme, notably in the purchase of old Ranelagh Gardens. For many years, too, every soldier contributed something of his pay to its upkeep.

The word charity is unknown there. Coming to a home, to the building of which the Army subscribed largely, every entrant must be an Army pensioner. He hands over his pension, receives food, lodging, clothes, furniture and pocket-money, and lives out the sunny autumn of his life in healthy independence and comfort. There are few restrictions. Every man may stay out till midnight, and every job of work done is paid for. The Pensioner gets his annual holiday for three weeks at Netley, and receives an extra sixpence a day for his swings and roundabouts.

The cubicles, built in sixteen long wards, recall ships' cabins. Doors and curious shutters recalling coffee-stalls are in honest Windsor oak. There are curtains that the old men may—so the Sergeant-Major admits—shut him out when they get tired of his face.

"Army rations?" remarked the same informant. "Bless you, no. Every member of a mess—thirteen men—gets his day for a 'shout.' He draws up his idea of a diet sheet for that day, and what he says goes. Of course it doesn't run to strawberries in the 'ten bob a pound' season, but within reason—— Tea is brewed in the wards by the 'dishman' of the week."

Beer? Of course there is beer, a pint a day all round. It is no longer issued in the great leathern 'jacks' which stand in the Great Hall.

One of the largest bombs dropped in London during the War fell in the Hospital precincts and killed five people. None of them were Pensioners, and only four of these old warriors so far disturbed themselves as to climb out of bed to see what the fuss was about. Time rolls on. Already you may see men in the Chelsea uniform wearing the Great War medals. And only the other day—as it seems—'Chelsea Pensioner' was a term almost synonymous with 'Crimean veteran.'

All soldiers in receipt of service, as distinct from 'disability' pensions, belong officially to the Royal Hospital. They are 'Out-Pensioners' and their affairs are regulated from Chelsea.

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They are no longer liable, as of old, to be swept up in times of stress into Invalid Battalions.

Old Harris, of the Rifles, leaves a Hogarthian picture in his 'Recollections.'

"Thousands of soldiers lounged about before the public-houses, with every description of wound and casualty incident to modern warfare. There hobbled the maimed light infantryman, the heavy dragoon, and specimens from every regiment in the Service. The Irishman shouting and brandishing his crutch, the English soldier reeling with drink, and the Scot, with grave and melancholy visage, sitting on the steps, thinking of the blue hills of his native land. Such was Chelsea in 1814."

And the man under whom they served—Chelsea has a last memory of him. He called them the "scum of the earth" yet admitted that with "that army" he could "go anywhere and do anything." The Duke lay in state in the Hall. He, whose crooked nose the soldiers cheered, came back to them at the last, and rested on a great oak dining-hall table.

The pewter table-services are engraved with the Royal cipher of King George II. The old soldiers still have their plum puddings from them on Oak Apple Day and other festivals.

Oak Apple Day! We hardly remember it. May 29th was at once the birthday and Restoration Day of King Charles II. His statue by Grinling Gibbons stands in the Courtyard,

moustache sacrificed to the Roman toga he wears. Every year on this, his day, he is hidden again in oak boughs as at Boscobel. By his feet tramp five hundred very gallant old gentlemen. Historians say hard things of our Merry Monarch. They are small beer. Every soldier of us all should look at the Royal Hospital and believe in the kindly sincerity of his smile.

At the other end of the scale stand the "Sons of the Brave," potential soldiers of the future.

Regulations, enormously solemn things, speak of the "Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover." The Army, a family affair, calls its little brothers the 'Dukies.' The term would have been very pleasing to the School's founder. Frederick, Duke of York, second son of George III, was, "big, burly, loud, jolly, cursing and courageous—noble and generous to a fault,—the Soldiers' Friend."

Le Marchant, in drawing up his plan for the foundation of the Royal Military College, wished to include a 'Legion' of soldiers' sons, which would at once provide material for the cadet to work on, and furnish a source for the future N.C.O.s of the Army. He was over-ruled, but his idea may have borne fruit later.

The Royal Military Asylum, as it was at first called, met a crying need for the relief of the children left destitute by the casualties of the Napoleonic wars. Started at Chelsea in 1801,



in the buildings now known as the Duke of York's Headquarters, the School was opened in 1803 by the admission of young John Evans, son of a corporal of the 81st.

Fifty years in advance of the civil administration, the Commissioners realised the importance of free and universal education. Fed at the rate of 6½*d.* per diem, refreshed exclusively on small beer, the 'Dukies' were generally envied. Even a scale of punishments which included the birch, the black-hole and the 'cage,' compared very favourably with that of other schools of the day.

The present School buildings, built as late as 1907, on an ideal site, according to the designs of the principal architect of His Majesty's Office of Works, are in every sense model. The organisation of the School in military companies lends itself to the plan of eight bungalows, each named after one of our great generals, grouped crescent fashion round the central buildings. Each house has its dormitories, day room, staff quarters, and bath house.

To each Company its Company Sergeant-Major, towering superbly huge above his command. Sergeant-Majors, one supposes, who have made strong men tremble in most parts of the Empire. Your 'Dukie' can 'jump to it' with the best, but there is a twinkle in the eye of the C.S.M. which elevates the whole business.

A stern affair, this *vie militaire*. Justice, the high, the middle and the low, must be done. I

have seen a tiny defaulter marched in with all the éclat of a veteran. The crime? Oh, heinous indeed. Throwing his cap and breaking an electric light globe. You know, it's mere expense that saves many of us from breaking electric light globes. They make such a grand bang. Our young miscreant had such a chapter of accidents to relate, his prosecutor "let him down" so lightly that he "got away with it" and stamped out into the corridor a free man.

Only since the War has Army Cookery been cultivated to an art. The School, as in a deal of ways, leads. Its kitchens are baronial in extent. Imagine a store for jam alone! Plum and Apple? Have we not won wars on it? But there is Strawberry too. They feed 'in drill time' at Dover. Five hundred round heads bob down as a prefect says grace. A tap of the drum and the gallant five hundred storm the oak tables that are a relic from Chelsea. Frederick, Duke of York, a tribute to Sir Joshua Reynolds and his own cook, smiles down from his frame.

Playing-fields have done their share in the achievement of victory. The 'Dukies' have twenty playing pitches, well-kept, even for Kent. Inter-company competitions at sport, as at work, go on all the year round, points counting towards the Championship. The Tudor Rose of the School Badge is hung above the mess tables of the Champion Company for the year. The schools of the neighbourhood are on visiting terms, and

like it. "You always get such a good feed there," said a secondary school boy in his own frank way.

Outside the normal labours of the class-room, the boys are divided for military training. They do their drills, they swim, they have their 'gym.' There are classes for signallers, gunners, tailors, carpenters and shoemakers. King George II, that little gentleman who so loved pottering round his realm making suggestions, "strongly recommended that the boys should be taught the use of artillery." On Empire Day, 1908, School gunners achieved a twenty-one gun salute to Farmer George's great-grandson, his Majesty King Edward VII.

To the great outside world the School is best known by its Band. Actually there are four bands, and the Drums. Three bands are in various and even painful stages. The fourth is "the Band which plays."

In the attitude of its private soldiery the School is a degree more military than the Army itself. The normal boy has not had time to develop a sense of proportion. Every act of his life is of equal importance. The 'Dukie,' whether knocking spots off Dover Castle with his quick-firer, sliding down the chute into the water, 'zooming' on the bombardon, or drawing a homely carrot in the art class, applies to it all a tremendous and visible earnestness—an earnestness melting with the greatest of ease into a grin.

Definitely recognised and established as a

military public school—it is indeed an approved school for nomination to cadetships—there is no obligation or contract on the part of the boys to take up a military career. Every boy is the son of a soldier, preference being given to orphans. The association of parentage and the military aspect of the School are strong enough to send 80 per cent. of the scholars to the Service.

Band-boys and tradesmen may enter the ranks from the School at the age of fifteen. The ‘Dukies’ are kept posted as to the regiments open. The walls of their library picture the deeds which have won the regiments fame. The only boys definitely committed to enlist are the prefects, who stay on till their eighteenth birthday. Receiving a rate of pay for their military and disciplinary duties, they continue their education, frequently to Matriculation standard. To them are open scholarships at Sandhurst or the ‘Shop.’ While no ‘Dukie’ has as yet grasped the traditional Marshal’s baton, two old boys have reached the rank of Major-General.

The Duke of York’s was the first public school to bear Colours. They were granted by George IV in 1825. Those now hanging in Chapel were, at the time of their replacement, the oldest pair in Army use, having been carried continuously for seventy-two years. New ones were presented in 1897.

The Army habit of reducing things to paper, while giving scope to the critics, enables us to

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formulate ideals and standards. The 'Dukies' aim at "no restricted following of old-time shibboleths, but a lively striving after the best in life. Straightness, love of fair play, courtesy, an ideal beyond the individual's own material advantage—all this is implied when one speaks of the

‘SONS OF THE BRAVE.’”

## CHAPTER X

### THE DRUMS OF ENGLAND

“FIRST Blankshire Regiment—By the Right—Quick March.” Away goes the Band, and we’ve slipped back five centuries in history. The double three-piece roll of the drums that started the march was the marching beat of the Landsknecht. The old mercenary pikemen of Europe set the military pace for centuries. Their free companies marched complete, women in the rear with the baggage, sons in front drubbing the drums from battlefield to battlefield. Adventurous Britons, returned from the wars, took a hand in the training of the Militia at home, bringing the pikemen’s drum-beat with them. There’s a whole catalogue of gallantry in our drums, from the silver state kettle-drums of the Life Guards, to the “little penny drum” that called exhausted men to their feet on the Retreat from Mons.

Among the many methods of classifying mankind there is one which would group men into those who regard the drum as an instrument of torture, and those whom it rouses to a frenzy of martial ardour. The former class will gain scant

comfort in learning that the drum was much in vogue in ancient Greece. They may also be driven to revise their ideas on the chivalry of our Crusading gentry, they being almost certainly responsible for the introduction of the delicately modulated instrument into Britain.

Drums, and their concomitant fifes, or trumpets, have long been a *sine qua non* of the military life. Indeed, as early as 1539 it was considered impossible to muster London's Trained Bands save "by the Musick of the Drummes and Fiffes." A few years later all captains were instructed that they "must have Drums and Fifes, secret and intelligent, able to use their instruments and to speak languages, for at all times they must parley with the enemy. If drums and fifes fall into the hands of the enemy, they must not reveal their secrets." The drummers of the infantry, as the trumpeters of the cavalry, often acted as heralds. It was little Wullie Ballantine, of the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders, who marched stolidly into Paris after Waterloo, bearing the white flag that called the proud capital to surrender to the Duke of Wellington.

Our King Henry VIII had martial ambitions. His soldiers shone resplendent on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and fought one siege. Then he heard tell that in Hungary someone had invented the kettle-drum, to be played on horseback. Not to be outdone, he had his kettle-drums,

and the men to play them, imported from Central Europe. Thus was England's cavalry inoculated with the germ.

At the Restoration, each troop of Life Guards had its kettle-drummer. The cost of equipping drummers and trumpeters of these troops was a direct charge on the Royal Wardrobe. Within a few years of King Charles II returning from his travels a very gorgeous uniform had been evolved, similar in detail to the massy state uniforms of the Household Cavalry bands of to-day.

Neither Horse nor Foot could be allowed to outdo the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Gunners had to trudge behind their charges. The guns themselves were for many years hauled by hired horses, driven by civilians who not infrequently left them in the lurch on the day of battle. But the kettle-drummer rode supreme in his chariot, with a drum perched to either side. In the Pageant of the Royal Artillery at the Royal Tournament of a few years back was seen the drummer of Marlborough's day at his fell trade, and an example of the carriage on which he plied it stands in the Rotunda Museum at Woolwich.

British drums at first tapped a strictly utilitarian note. Besides the sternly practical beat of the march they gave the signals now more generally sounded on the bugle. Cromwell's drummers used six calls only. These were, the Drummers' Call, March, Troop, Preparative, Battle and



Retreat. The great Tattoos of to-day had their humble origin in the nightly march of the Drums round the camp or garrison, calling soldiers from their pleasures to Roll Call. It is a matter of interest that the Trumpeter of the 'Blues' still sounds First and Last Posts *outside* the Barrack Gates each evening.

Our Army to-day, perversely old-fashioned in custom, officially ignores fifers and buglers, except in a very few regiments, calling them still 'drummers.' Some regiments of the Brigade of Guards still use certain drum and fife calls. These were published by authority in 1817, as the *Drum and Fife Duty for the Army*. The simple tunes used are believed to be fragments of old ballads, long forgotten in their entirety, the 'Tipperaries,' maybe, of wars long past.

That oldest of all regiments, the Royal Scots, has the oldest of all our regimental marches, "Dumbarton's Drums." Supposed to have been composed by a soldier of the regiment in the seventeenth century, the simple air is typical of the "Musick of the Drummes and Fiffes." This was the tune—described by him as the "Scots March"—which old Samuel Pepys heard when Dumbarton's marched through Rochester in 1673, and thought 'very odd.'

In days when each colonel was required to send out his own recruiting parties, such detachments were always accompanied by a drummer. The little squad plodded on from village to village,

halting in every market-place. The drummer rolled his summons, the sergeant intoned his proclamation, the civilian fell for the red coat of the King's Service. Recruiting instructions were termed 'beating orders' and the party was enjoined to gather in its harvest "by beat of drum or otherwise." The 'otherwise' would, one supposes, be taken to cover all such tricky business as the tapping of unwary ploughboys over the head, or the slipping of the 'King's shilling' into a tankard of ale.

Drummers would seem to have been the general utility men of the Army. There is a scandalous story told of that Earl of Oxford who was the first colonel of the Royal Horse Guards. A somewhat hectic romance between the peer and a London actress was brought to its normal zenith by marriage. At least, so the lady thought, until it was revealed that the parson and clerk who carried out the ceremony were none other than the well-disguised and doubtless much-amused kettle-drummer and trumpeter of one troop of the Oxford Regiment of Horse.

The drums have always lent colour to a regiment. The colour was literally deepened when the fashion set in of employing negro drummers. Admiral Boscawen, 'old Hammer-and-Nails' Boscawen, at the capture of Guadeloupe in 1759, acquired what were perhaps the original Ten Little Nigger Boys. He sent them as a gift to his brother, then colonel of the 29th

Foot. The 29th are better known to-day as the 1st Battalion Worcestershire Regiment. They were trained as drummers, and some of them, at least, were still on parade sixteen years later.

The 29th evidently esteemed its black drummers. Major-General Sir W. Howe, inspecting the Regiment at Dover in 1770, found ten of its drummers "as black as your hat." Seventeen years later again, another general, putting the regiment through its paces at Windsor, remarked, tersely, in his report, "The Drummers black, beat and play well." When stationed in Tralee in 1824 the 29th were able to replenish their stock by importing eleven native boys from the African shore.

Custom spread rapidly, and the 29th were not to remain unique in their band. A band without its negroes soon came to be as little esteemed as an egg without salt. The old 38th and others collected drummers during long years in West Indian stations. Regiments of the Gibraltar Garrison got theirs from just over the water. Regiments in the East had to be content with coffee-coloured imitations of the real thing. Some colonels conferred blessings by purchasing slaves from the plantations. The 'percussion' family was well represented in military bands. Drums, cymbals, tambourines and 'jingling Johnnies' were all handed over to native performers. Given the whole width of the road in which to perform, they capered diligently in

peace and war at the heads of otherwise quite respectable marching battalions.

The Militia followed hard on the heels of the Regulars. In a letter of July 1793 a gentleman of Lavenham, in Suffolk, wrote: "We have had four companies of the West Middlesex Militia quartered upon us, who had the best band I ever heard. It consisted of five clarionets, two French horns, one bugle horn, one trumpet, two bassoons, two triangles, two tambourines (the performers mulattoes) and the clash pans by a real blackamoor, a very active man, who walked between the two mulattoes, which had a very grand appearance indeed." And, no doubt, made a very grand noise.

Even the Brigade of Guards succumbed, under the influence of the Royal Dukes who were their colonels. The huge black drummer of the Grenadiers, in his white trousers, scarlet tunic, and tall turban, is familiar through Hall's lithograph of 1829. The turban was customary for the negroes of most regiments. The retention to this day in certain battalions of the Line of the drummer's leopard skin apron is said to be traceable to the jungle clothing of the negroes.

Francis of the Grenadiers, the last black Guardsman, distinguished by a silver collar worn with his uniform, was a notability in London. It is told of him how he was once accosted by a stranger in the Strand.

"Well, Darkie, what news of the Devil?"

“ He send you dat,” replied Francis, promptly knocking the inquirer down. “ How you like it? ”

Francis died in 1839, a year after the Coldstream had discharged its last black drummer. George Cardwell, last of them all, belonged, like the first, to the ‘ Ever-sworded Twenty-ninth.’ He was buried in India in 1843.

Black drummers in the cavalry were not so common. The kettle-drummer was no mean personage. In some regiments he ranked as a warrant officer, and had his name at the head of the muster rolls, among the quartermasters. When a cavalry band played dismounted, the lordly kettle-drummer was preceded by a fatigue man with the drum on his back. The 3rd and 4th Hussars, however, both had black drummers in the eighteenth century. The 3rd Hussars drummer sported a silver collar, engraved with military devices. It was presented in 1776 by the wife of Charles Fitzroy, Lord Southampton, who had been appointed to the colonelcy of the regiment in 1772. The collar is still in the regiment and is worn on great occasions by the kettle-drummer.

As far as can be traced the Household Cavalry never marched behind a black drummer. A print dated 1740, now in Windsor Castle, does show, however, a very black trumpeter of the Life Guards, and three black trombone-players of the 2nd Life Guards are still remembered as

a sensation of London in the eighteen-forties. The regimental records of the 1st Life Guards reveal that that regiment actually made an attempt to fall into line with prevailing military fashion. In the first few years of the last century several ebony-faced gentlemen were enlisted into that regiment. It cannot be traced that any of these ever attained the dignity of kettle-drummer, but there is a sad note of one of them. John Thomas Uzabb, of Martinique, was discharged on 11th April, 1802, "in consequence of his not being able to learn to beat the drum."

Western civilisation, at times, appeared too strong for these black soldiers. Toby Gill, drummer of the 4th Hussars, was hanged at Ipswich in 1750 for murder. His successor was flogged for killing a horse. Othello and Carter, trumpeters of the same regiment, were entered on board a man-o'-war by sentence of a court-martial, an interesting commentary on the respective popularity of land and sea service. It is but fair to add that 'Bush' Johnstone, the last coloured drummer of the 4th, rose to the dizzy heights of trumpet-major, parading for the last time in 1842.

Black drummers are only rivalled in picturesqueness by the drum-majors. The historian of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers has coined the expression 'drum-major dandyism.' He tells the sad story of the drum-major of his own regiment who died as a result of a long struggle

between an increasing waist measurement and his corset laces. Two drummers were detailed to attend him each morning for the purpose of forcing him into his uniform.

A Royal Warrant of October 12th, 1661, enriched the King's Company of the 1st Guards, and gave birth to this noble rank in the British Service. By 1679 a Drum-major-General still further embellished the Army List. Even as late as 1777 the rank was still in existence, one Charles Stuart being appointed to fill it. The exact nature of his duties is not known, but there were perquisites attached to it. An early item of £5 12s. is noted as having been paid for the enlistment of sixteen drummers into the Coldstream Guards.

During a long, and surely dark, period of our history regulations forced the drum-majors to be content with the meagre title of 'sergeant drummer.' This rank was never more than official, and the full title of the rank has been restored since the War.

The drummers of old had a sterner side to their duty. In the *Regimental Companion* (7th edition, 1811) it is written, "It is the duty of the regimental drum-major to see that the cat-o'-nine tails are properly prepared. He ought also to be particularly careful that no extraordinary ingenuity is exercised to make the knots heavier or more searching than the human frame can bear. God forbid that a prevalent report should

be true, relative to the insertion of lead in some cats that were used during the Irish effervescence. Left-handed drummers ought also to be excused from being the means of adding unnecessary torture, by cutting the back of a soldier across the former stripes, which must be the case when right- and left-handed drummers inflict the lashes." The strange mixture of sheer brutality and apparent mercy is typical of the time at which the instructions were written.

The prisoner was strung up in the hollow square of the regiment to the sergeants' halberds. The drum-major was the conductor of the ceremony. Between each stroke came ten taps on the drum. Sentences running sometimes to as many as twelve hundred lashes might be strung out for days, as the surgeon certified that the culprit was able to endure punishment. It would seem, however, that the infantryman who received his punishment from the drummers was luckier than his comrade of the mounted arm, where the lash was laid on by strong-armed farriers.

Among the glories of the drum-major's equipment are his staff and belt. Many drum-majors add to their musical accomplishments an agility with the staff which would put a professional juggler to shame. One swaggering gentleman used to put a fitting flourish to weekly church parade by flinging his weapon over the scrolled bar surmounting the barrack gate as the regiment marched in. There was an impious but un-



fulfilled wish among his rivals that he might one Sunday fail to catch it.

Probably the oldest drum-major's staff is that preserved by the Honourable Artillery Company, which bears the date 1671. The Dorset Regiment cherishes a staff of solid silver presented to the old 39th Foot by the Rajah of Arcot after the battle of Plassey. Remember that the Dorsetshire bears the proud motto "*Primus in Indis*," landing at Madras in 1754 first of all 'King's Regiments.'

The drums of enemy regiments have been fought for almost as fiercely as their colours. At Dettingen the 3rd Dragoons cut a pair of silver kettle-drums from the French ranks. George III remembered his grandfather's soldiers when, on Christmas Day, 1778, he granted to the 3rd the distinction of an extra kettle-drummer and drum horse, a privilege retained to this day by the 3rd King's Own Hussars. The actual Dettingen drums were carried on parade for many a year, until they were destroyed in a fire. They were replaced by the present set of silver drums bought by the officers of the regiment. In commemoration of the battle of Dettingen, the drums are never covered by drum banners. The 7th Dragoon Guards, then 'Ligonier's,' captured a pair of brass drums in the same battle.

The 3rd Carabiniers and two infantry regiments share a curious trophy. At Magdala in 1868 the three regiments shared in the capture of the

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state drum of the King of Abyssinia. It was of fourteenth-century workmanship, of silver, inlaid with beaten gold. Some British Solomon cut the drum of Solomon's descendant into three, giving to each regiment a portion. A few years ago the drum was re-assembled temporarily and photographed.

Our champion drum collectors are the 1st Bn. the Border Regiment. Reference has already been made to the battle of Arroyo-dos-Molinos. No other regiment bears this battle honour. It was at Arroyo, on October 28th, 1811, that the 34th Foot, as the 1st Battalion then was, found itself opposite the 34th of the French Line.

The regiment had made a forced march through the night to keep its appointment, and was ripe for mischief. The charge was made with the greatest gusto. The French were taken by surprise and endeavoured to escape from the village where they were billeted into the surrounding hills. The 34th and others went after them. Big Sergeant Simpson, of the Grenadier Company, made at the drum-major of the French 34th, and wrested his staff from him. The drum-major disposed of, his drummers seem to have been demoralised, and the regiment after them. The men of the Border marched proudly out of action, with the French staff and drums at their head, wearing French caps, and with what was left of a French regiment captive in their train.

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The 'pom-poms' worn on the shakos of the 34th were thereafter changed to red and white, these being the colours of the French regiment. This distinction became non-effective, however, when the crests of the whole of the infantry took on those colours. The badge of the Border Regiment now has a red-and-white centre, and Queen Victoria granted the battle honour.

Every year, on October 28th, the French drums are paraded again. "Troop the French drums" is the order, and the drummer boys, in French uniforms of the Peninsular period, advance in slow time to take them up. The youngest boy in the battalion carries the French drum-major's staff, and becomes, for the day only, a member of the Sergeants' Mess. The regimental march of the Border Regiment combines 'John Peel' with the march of the French 34th, the score of which formed part of the loot. At midnight, in the Sergeants' Ball-room, the drums are trooped once more.

The men of the Border do not rest on their laurels. They stormed into Sebastopol in 1854. They carried out with them four Victoria Crosses—three of them awarded to private soldiers—the weather-vane from the Town Hall, and a set of black-and-white Russian drums. The officers having already claimed the French instruments, the sergeants hold those of Russia. These, too, are occasionally trooped, unofficially, but with considerable éclat.

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The 34th exercised a good deal of tact in the Crimea, by the way. They took the French drums campaigning with them. Then, hearing that the French 34th was present, as allies this time, of course, they took the precaution of whitewashing their trophies, lest gallant men's hearts should be wrung by the sight of them.

Some regiments treasure drums of honour. The general introduction of the territorial system of regimental titles, finally crystallised by the 'Cardwell Scheme' of 1881, has given counties and cities particular pride in individual regiments. Furthermore, since the War there has been some attempt on the part of the authorities to let counties see something of their regiments when possible. Presentations too by their home counties have often taken the form of silver drums.

Best known to the public of all our drums are the silver state kettle-drums of the regiments of Household Cavalry. Those of the Blues are the oldest. King George III was a great admirer of that regiment. It was kept at Windsor by his particular desire for more than twenty years. The statue of the King in Cockspur Street shows him in Blues uniform. On St. George's Day 1800, prior to an installation of the Knights of the Garter, he presented the pair of drums at present in use. An inscription testifies that they were presented as a "testimonial of the Regiment's honourable and military conduct on all occasions."

The two regiments of Life Guards had their

turn later. King William IV is remembered as the 'Sailor King,' but he took great pride in his Army too. At Windsor in 1831 he presented a pair of drums to each regiment. Great ceremonial was used, and, on the occasion of the presentation to the First Regiment, the Household Cavalry was paraded once more under Lord Edward Somerset, who had led them so nobly on the great day of Waterloo. The drums were supplied at a cost of £1000 a pair and are worthy both of the silversmith who made them and the regiments at whose head they are still borne.

A long and stately line of drum horses have added to the dignity of the Cavalry kettle-drummers. Most people will remember that one of the Life Guards whose picture by Mr. Munnings was a feature of the R.A. a few years back. It is a matter of proud competition between regiments to acquire worthy animals to carry their drums. Some of the amalgamated regiments of cavalry still maintain two horses and pairs of drums. The horse of the Royal Scots Greys is, by way of contrast to the rest of the regiment, a stately black.

'Mary,' the bearer of the 'Dettingen' drums of the 3rd Hussars, joined that regiment in Egypt in 1923. She travelled on to India, and served five years on the Lucknow station. The regiment was ordered to York in 1932, and the stringent economy measures in force necessitated leaving her behind. Cavalry horses are not

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normally moved into or out of India, being passed on from one regiment to another. But 'Mary' was such a part of the regiment that every man, from the colonel to the last-joined trumpeter, subscribed to the cost of her transport, £40 in all. 'Mary' stepped sedately off the boat at Southampton, proud tribute to the glowing soul of a British regiment.

## CHAPTER XI

### OUR AMAZONS

BRITISH fighting, at least until the invention of the late-lamented W.A.A.C.s, has always been man-made and man-fought. We have never, like his dusky Majesty of Dahomey, sent our legions of Amazons forth to battle. Yet odd members of the sex have evaded the regulations and have stood in the fighting ranks.

Foremost in fame is Christina Davies, also remembered as 'Mother Ross.' Born in Dublin in 1667, daughter of a brewer, Christina married a man named Welch. Welch went off quietly one day and enlisted. Christina, not easily baulked of her prey, enlisted herself in an endeavour to find him. In the Army of Dutch William she fought, was wounded at Landen, and taken prisoner. She was exchanged in due course, and is seen again in action, under Marlborough, in the assault on the Schellenburg. Here she received her second wound, and, her sex being discovered, she was discharged. She had between battles found time to fight a duel—for the honour of a woman.

Christina had had enough of foot-slogging

and re-enlisted in the Scots Greys. It was now that she discovered her errant husband, himself a private of the 1st Foot. He was living, sad to relate, with a Dutch woman, whose nose the swashbuckling legal spouse hacked off, a supporting of wifely honour surely without parallel.

Christina soldiered on with the Greys until the battle of Ramillies, where the French cracked her skull. Discharged once more, she was reconciled to her husband, and launched out as the proprietress of a canteen. We see her at Malplaquet, thrice wounded, but sticking to her job, ladling out beer in the very firing line.

The career of her husband being rudely terminated by a ball, Christina, we have to relate, placed herself under the protection of a Captain Ross, until a second marriage into the ranks restored her virtuous state. One account takes the newly-married couple to St. Vincent. Another makes them tramp to St. Venant only—a greater variation in geography than in spelling. In the Indies or in Flanders, whichever it was, she was widowed again, and, returning to England, received the widows' pension of one pound a week.

Once more she dived with fate, marrying her third husband, a soldier named Davies. He, with Christina in his train, fought on until he was admitted a pensioner to Chelsea. In 1739 the gallant lady left the battle-field of life. She was buried as a soldier, either at Chelsea or at Fulham.



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There is a version of her story which keeps her alive until 1775, when she must have faded away at the very old-soldierly age of 108.

Hannah Snell had a much shorter but very hectic career in the Service. She was born at Worcester in 1723. The loss of her lover through a Marine press-gang drove her, in 1745, to enlist as a marine herself, in Colonel Frazer's regiment. In the sloop 'Swallow,' a unit of Boscawen's squadron, she sailed East. Her lover died on the voyage, as men were very apt to do in those days. The bold Hannah took part in the siege of Pondicherry, and received twelve wounds from shell splinters, of which one was in the groin. This wound she concealed, but the secret of her sex was discovered nevertheless, and she was sent packing to England. Refusing several offers of marriage from her former comrades, she received a pension through the good offices of the Duke of Cumberland, and is buried in the graveyard of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

In the old churchyard at Brighton may be seen the tombstone of Phœbe Hessel, who lived to be more than one hundred years old, in spite of an adventurous career with the fighting Foot. The details of her career are not very clear. Enamoured of a Private Golding of the 2nd Queen's, she is herself said to have enlisted in the 5th. With her regiment she served five years in the West Indies, returning to fight at Fontenoy in 1745. So runs the account, but the regiment,

at all events, is wrong, since the 5th was neither in the West Indies during the necessary period nor was it engaged at Fontenoy.

Transferred to Gibraltar, she found and married her old lover. Together they spent twenty happy years until his death. She subsequently married one Hessel, with whom she removed to Brighton to live out her days.

Perhaps the most amazing of all such careers is that of Doctor James Barry, who, dying in 1865, and buried at Kensal Green, was Inspector-General of Army Hospitals. Born in 1795 the doctor passed through all the grades of the army hospital service, rising in course of time to be medical adviser to the Governor of Cape Town. Barry's cabin companion of the voyage home was both hurt and angry by the doctor's insistence on complete privacy whilst dressing or undressing, and more by the fierce hound which was kept for the enforcement of these wishes. Not until death was it discovered that the Inspector-General was a woman. There is much unexplained mystery about her, but she is believed to have been the grand-daughter of a Scots Earl, whose love for an Army surgeon had taken the strange course of driving her to follow his profession.

There is no space to follow the careers, a little involved by the nature of their secrecy, of several other real Amazons in our military history. There was Mary Anne Talbot, illegitimate

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daughter of a nobleman, who drubbed a drum in the 82nd Foot, and served as cabin boy aboard the 'Brunswick' on the "Glorious First of June." William Roberts, the 'Female Light Dragoon,' served her King in the East and West Indies, in Flanders, Spain, France and Italy. Twice wounded, a prisoner of France for two years, she retired to Manchester as a pensioner in 1814, and there lived out her days.

. . . . .

More regular, but just as fascinating, is the story of the women who have followed the drum as guides, philosophers, friends, and even wives of the fighting men. From earliest times women, in varying shades of virtue, have followed armies of all nations. Wars in the olden times were leisurely affairs enough, conducted on well-defined principles. In their wake toiled vast circuses of baggage and baggages. The old mercenary companies of the Continent, indeed, even included on their establishment a gentleman called the 'Hüerenwebel,' whose function it was to take charge of the ladies.

Marriage, in the early days of the British Army, did not constitute a very serious bond. Sergeant Kite, in Farquhar's play the *Recruiting Officer*, first given in 1705, reckons with complacency the five alliances corresponding with the five military stations in which he had spent any length of time.

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General Mostyn, who, during the Seven Years' War, commanded the British contingent during the absence of the Marquis of Granby, was greatly exercised as to the administration of the funds sent for the relief of soldiers' widows on service. He wrote home to the Marquis that he was "endeavouring to do the utmost good with these gifts possible," but added that there was "no confining the relief to widows only. A soldier's widow rarely remains so above twenty-four hours: and a wife or a woman following the Army might be as necessitous and fit an object for charity as any other."

Which rather links up with the note made in 1806 by Lady Hunter in her journal. She records a Mrs. Morrison who had married six soldier husbands in succession, "a triumph," as one writer has said, "of hope over experience."

Five hundred and seventy-nine women accompanied the Quebec expedition. Wolfe was shrewd enough to make use of them in his scheme of discipline. One man tried for cowardice was sentenced to ride the wooden horse for an hour every day for a week, dressed in a petticoat, with a broom in his hand and a placard to his back, "This is the reward of my merit." Another was sentenced to stand "for an hour this evening at ye necessary house, in woman's clothes." From the regimental women, "hard as nails, expert plunderers, supreme partisans of the excellence of their own battalions, much given to fighting,"

offenders against the military code would receive little mercy.

It is comforting to recall that not one of the Quebec women was a casualty. A return rendered during the winter of 1759-60 records their survival *en masse*, "in good health, eating their rations, and fit for their duties both by day and by night."

On various occasions the women forgot their sex and got into action. Elizabeth Hopkins accompanied her husband's regiment, the 104th, to the American Rebellion. She was first wounded in a naval action in which she helped serve the guns. She fought with the guns again at the siege of Pensacola, tearing strips from her clothing to make wads. Both she and her husband were taken prisoner. She contrived not only their own escape, but that of twenty-two deserters from the Colonial side. Pursued by rebel dragoons, the fearless woman shot one of them, and rode his horse in triumph into Philadelphia.

Among other incidents in her career she numbered a shipwreck and the bearing of twenty-two children, including triplets. Two of her sons, and a stray son-in-law, were killed before her eyes at Lake Erie, but she rallied the remainder and urged them again into action.

General Stewart recalls a stirring incident at St. Vincent in 1796. During an engagement, the wife of a man of the 42nd ran up to him, her skirts girded up to her knees, and clutched his arm.

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"Well done, my Highland lads," she cried. "See how the brigands scamper like so many deer. Come and let us drive them from yonder hill." With which she dashed into the fray, apparently dragging the General with her.

The Duke of York in his 1794 campaign found the women-folk something of a trial. In spite of all precautions, a number of them followed the Guards Brigade into action at Tourcoing. The day went against us, and some of the ladies, intent upon plunder, fell into enemy hands. Gallic courtesy, even under the Republic, proved itself. A few days later a regimental band headed the missing women back to the British lines.

In the early days of the Peninsular War a British force was besieged at Cadiz. At Fort Matagorda, Mrs. Ritson, wife of a sergeant of the 94th, played a notable part. The well from which the garrison drew its water was under fire, and a drummer-boy, warned for water fatigue, declined the job. Mrs. Ritson took his place. She reached the well, and had lowered the bucket when a shot cut the rope. She retrieved the bucket, and succeeded in her task. Later she was seen, pike in hand, helping to repel an attack. When at last the place fell, she was among the last of the garrison to march out.

The position of Army women received official attention in 1800. General Calvert, Adjutant-General, drew up regulations regarding the

women who were to accompany troops abroad. Such women, "being the lawful wives of soldiers," were to be in the proportion of six to every hundred men. "Inattention to this circumstance," ran the edict, "has in many instances been productive of serious prejudice to His Majesty's Service."

The women for the Peninsula were drawn by lot. The unlucky papers bore the words "To be left." The weeping unfortunates received a sop of one guinea, with five shillings for each child, to enable them to return to their homes.

Such women and children as went to Portugal were treated officially as part of the regimental establishment, and figure in the Parade States, carefully grouped to the right, together with muleteers and animals. Each woman received a half ration and each child a third.

Captain Mercer of the Royal Horse Artillery has left in his journal a description of them a very few years later. He had landed his battery at Ostend for the Waterloo campaign, and found time to stroll round.

"At the corner of the quay was a group of boatmen listlessly reclining on the pavement, or lounging up and down with folded arms, amusing themselves with the bustling anxiety of a score of soldiers' wives, who, loaded with children or bundles, their ample grey or red cloaks flying out behind them, struggled through all impediments opposed to their progress with

an activity, perseverance and volubility which seemed highly diverting to the mariners, many of whom, in broken English, were bantering these Amazons or exchanging coarse jokes with them; at which play, the ladies being mostly from the Green Isle, the gentlemen came off second best."

It was heavy going for the women who followed the Peninsular Army. The notes of that chatty shoemaker of the 95th, Rifleman Harris, so happily preserved, are full of references to their adventures.

They shared with their husbands the rigours of the Corunna Retreat. Harris tells of one poor soul (an Irishwoman named M'Guire) who stumbled along very near the time of her delivery. At last she fell out, together with her husband, and the remnants of the battalion marched on, convinced that here were two more who would never be seen again. To everyone's amazement, the couple, now a trio, eventually rejoined the column. Master M'Guire, to round off the story, lived to be seen, years afterwards, a stalwart young man.

There was in the same battalion a man of the North Mayo Militia, Pullen by name. With him to the wars went wife, son and daughter. He lost them all during the Retreat. The battalion reached England at last. Pullen, standing disconsolate on Portsmouth Beach after disembarkation, saw his wife step off a troopship



belonging to another regiment. She had been taken prisoner by the French, but released. Susan, the daughter, was brought safely home by a battery of artillery, while the son wrote home from a French prison.

The wife of Sergeant Anton of the 42nd, another Peninsular heroine, bore witness to the rough gentility of the men in the ranks. Even when she shared a tent with eleven soldiers, the proprieties were strictly observed. It is, however, with a blush that one records, later in the war, her eviction from a pig-sty by the battalion orderly-room clerk.

No hardship kept these women from following the drum, although they found almost as great a difficulty in overcoming the regulations of the Army as in dealing with climate, short commons or the operations of the enemy. At one stage an official proclamation forbade women to ride on the regimental transport. Few of them were without a little money, whether from plunder, the trade of a *cantinière*, or the humbler avocation of washing and mending. They thereupon bought donkeys and became still greater nuisances. Next it was ordained that any donkey found elsewhere than in rear of its own battalion would be shot.

Many were the shrill curses directed against the Provost Marshal. Usually it had been in front of the column that the devoted women rode, for they reckoned it part of their duty to have a

comforting drop of tea ready against the arrival of their lords. It was not, indeed, until a few donkeys really had been shot that the ladies realised the seriousness of the situation and some semblance of order was introduced.

Humour lurks everywhere. During the retreat from Burgos a donkey halted in the narrow way approaching a ford. The blockage which threatened the entire army was only cleared by the battalion strong man, who seized the animal and carried it, complete with lady owner, bodily over the stream.

Strange as all this appears to a modern military man, our own army compared very favourably with the French were it only in a certain rough morality. A French officer who was taken prisoner at Vittoria, remarked to his captor, "*Le fait est, monsieur, que vous avez une armée, tandis que nous avons un bordel ambulante.*"

Many British soldiers, during the long war, gathered to them girls of Portugal or Spain. Loud were the lamentations when the Army arrived in France and the war ended. It was then decreed that only those women who could produce evidence of legal matrimony were to accompany the troops to England.

One such Spanish marriage has come down as the Army's perfect romance. On a dark April night in 1812 our forces stormed Badajoz. Never has there been a completer sack by British troops. So far out of hand were the

men that the life of Wellington himself was threatened.

On the morning after the sack, two young officers of the 95th Rifles were at a tent door outside the town. They saw approaching a Spanish woman and a young girl. Blood flowed from their ears where the troops had snatched from them their golden ear-rings. The elder woman was the wife of an absent Spanish officer, the girl her sister, fourteen years of age, Juana Maria de los Dolores de Leon. 'Little' Johnnie Kincaid, one of the two officers, writes: "To look at her was to love her. And I did love her; but I never told my love, and in the meantime another and a more impudent fellow stepped in and won her." This other was his companion, Captain Harry Smith.

Descendant of a noble family, Juana entered into her new profession with all the joy of youth. Mounted on an Arab horse, she had to be ordered off the battle-field of Salamanca. She slept through that battle on a bundle of straw, only disturbed by her horse eating the bed from beneath her.

Through the enemy patrols she galloped to return a Sèvres slop-basin that a soldier servant had 'borrowed.' There are pictures of her leaping her horse into the swollen Huebra on the Burgos retreat, thereby giving a lead to a Spanish parson who was in their train; encouraging Kincaid with a hand-clasp as he marched out to

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Vittoria; holding an umbrella through a long wet night while a rheumatically general slept.

Small wonder that, in Harry Smith's own words, "The soldiers of the whole division loved her with enthusiasm, and she would laugh and talk with all, which a soldier loves. Blackguards as many of the poor gallant fellows were, there was not a man who would not have laid down his life for her."

They were married in France in 1814, and went together to the final tilt at Waterloo. It was while she waited in Brussels that word was brought that her 'Enrique' was killed. She sprang to the saddle and dashed out, to learn, after a long search, that he was safe, and on his way to France. At three in the morning she rode on, to be clasped to the gallant green-jacketed breast at Bavray.

Harry Smith's motto was "Soldier on." It was good enough for Juana. Together they served in India and in South Africa. Khaki troops fighting the Boers never knew that in the Ladysmith they defended or relieved was remembered the little Spanish girl that a handsome young Rifleman had rescued at Badajoz.

. . . . .

If the lot of the soldier's wife was hard on active service it was not a bed of roses in peace time. There were no barracks in England until 1792, except in a few of the old castles which

were still garrisoned. But in the first Barrack Regulations published Commanding Officers were permitted to approve the presence of women, "for the greater cleanliness and convenience of the soldier."

Most regiments allowed one married woman per troop room. In return for their accommodation they would wash, mend and cook for the dozen or so men in the room. The married couple would take a corner berth, and screen it off with blankets. Generally, surprisingly enough, the system worked, and it was even maintained that the presence of the women improved the tone of barrack-room life.

There were, of course, hard cases among the women. John Shipp tells of 'Old Mag,' his colour-sergeant's wife. She would wheedle money out of recruits' pockets to spend on spirits. Roaring drunk she would return 'home' to beat her husband, until herself knocked out, in self-defence, by the troops, who would eventually throw her, a speechless bundle, into bed.

Various regiments had their own methods of reform. Some, first among them the 11th Hussars, set aside special barrack rooms for married families. This was not always a success. The women as a whole preferred their old life. Each was a queen in her small domain, which she could not be when it was shared by none but other married folk. Finding their old occupation of 'charring' for the troops gone, the women

often fell to quarrelling among themselves. Other Commanding Officers went to the extreme of refusing to have women in barracks at all notably in London, where barrack accommodation was of the worst description.

There was much agitation, from time to time on the subject of the provision of married quarters but officialdom moves slowly, and money for military reform is hard to come by. At last, in 1852, despairing of Government action, the officers of the Brigade of Guards raised £9000 by private subscription, and built the Victoria Lodging House in Frances Street, Vauxhall Bridge Road. Quarters were let out to married families of the Brigade at 2s. 6d. per week. The War Office was roused by the discovery that such transactions between officers and soldiers constituted a breach of "good order and military discipline."

The matter was settled by a Government purchase of the offending building at slightly less than cost price. Though still further delayed by the Crimean War, reform was at hand. The building of quarters was commenced. The first examples contained only one room and a scullery. Specimens were until recently to be seen in the London District. Since the War there have been great improvements in Army married life. Some of the newer quarters are not in barracks at all. Bit by bit they are being improved in the matter of the

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provision of baths, decoration and general convenience.

Not all men who are married men can be provided for. A married man, to be recognised as such, must be twenty-six years of age, when he is placed on the Marriage Allowance Roll, receiving a weekly cash grant for his wife and each child. He stands to take his turn to come on the Married Quarters Roll, which means that he will either be placed in quarters, or receive allowances in lieu. The establishment of this Roll is made up of 7 per cent. of the privates and corporals, 50 per cent. of the sergeants, and 100 per cent. of higher non-commissioned and warrant ranks of the Army.

These arrangements have gone a very long way towards alleviating the lot of the married soldier. He has, it is true, to contend with the frequent moves of his unit, but even here he is helped. His quarter contains the essential articles of furniture, so that he need have but few personal belongings of his own to move.

The very last tales of married women on active service are told in connection with the Crimean War. They were not supposed to be there, but may be accounted for by reason of the fact that some of the units used were diverted from their routine journeys to Egypt or India.

One married lady in particular gained fame at Balaclava, an Honour by the way which is unique among the infantry to her regiment, the

93rd Sutherland Highlanders. It was here, under the eye of Sir Colin Campbell, that the 93rd earned the name of the 'Thin Red Line.'

The 93rd were supposed to have been supported by a reserve of Ottoman Infantry, but these fled early in the day. Somewhere in rear of the line stood Mrs. Smith, wife of a 93rd sergeant, calmly doing the troops' washing, war or no war. About her surged the flying Turks. The doughty lady, whether fearful for her laundry or scornful of cowardice, laid on with her copper-stick, and hastened the Turks still more. Wherefore she was afterwards known among them as 'Kulana'—which is to say 'Lady' Smith.



## CHAPTER XII

### ROYAL WHITEHALL

FREE shows and mysteries—these are the breath of life to public enjoyment. Both meet in one small cobbled yard in Whitehall. Seven days a week, wet or fine, the crowd gathers to see the Guard changed. Even the Londoner checks his customary quick-step. Country cousins count half-an-hour well spent. On high days and holidays the military must be protected from their admirers by the Civil power.

*Punch* has written of “the last romance that makes the nursemaid swoon with rapture,” and continues to confess:

“I too adore those splendid twins  
(Rigid as some equestrian statue)  
Whose eyes, peculiar to the ‘Tins,’  
Look into space and never at you.”

Very handsome—and few know quite what it is all about. Americans expect the sentries to answer questions on British history. The true story is still told of one such, complete to the last traditional detail, who demanded to be shown, “Whereabouts around here was your Charles One decapitated?”

Kind old ladies have been known to inquire trustingly of Admirals of the Fleet by name. Heaven knows what business they should have with admirals of even minor degree. Some folks hold that the Household Cavalry sentries keep a stern professional eye on the War Office opposite. Others suspect dark secrets in the Horse Guards building itself. Prosaic people who take no pleasure in life put the place down as a mere barrack and leave it at that.

Actually Horse Guards is the Guard House of the Royal Palace of Whitehall. The Guard is the 'King's Life Guard'—the Cavalry Guard of the Sovereign. It can be turned out, mounted, only to their Majesties if accompanied by an escort, or to the Gold Stick in Waiting. The latter is himself a Colonel of Household Cavalry, whose duty it is to "wait upon the King's person, from his rising to his going to bed—before all others."

Since Charles II rode triumphant into London Town, his own troop of Life Guards with him, the Guard has been kept here. Close by, before the Life Guards were, the Gentlemen Pensioners of Charles I had their Court of Guard; for, a few yards further on towards Westminster, the roadway was spanned by the Holbein Gate of the Palace.

Old Whitehall Palace had a glamorous history. Built originally by Hubert de Burgh under Henry III, it was for centuries the London home

of York's Archbishops. Coming inevitably to Cardinal Wolsey, it passed as inevitably to Bluff Harry, his King. It was the Tudor sporting centre, the Stamford Bridge of the sixteenth century and later. The Cockpit rose where now stands the Privy Council Office. Treasury clerks juggle with finance where monarchs played tennis. Knights rode clanking in the Tilt Yard which we call the Horse Guards Parade. Henry even founded St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, that he might be no more annoyed by funerals passing to Westminster under his Palace windows. He himself died at Whitehall and his daughters after him.

Whitehall, whatever its origin, is pre-eminently Stuart. James I allowed his imagination to soar. His fancy swept away the whole chance-planned welter of buildings, and catered for a palace that should make Europe wonder. The Banqueting Hall, which now houses the United Services Museum, was the only part of his plan ever completed. Inigo Jones created it: Rubens put his art into the ceiling. Vandyck was to have made the walls glow, but to our loss did not. The bill amounted to £14,940 4s. 1d. James took the whole of his reign to settle it, but did not overlook so much as the odd penny.

Lord Beaconsfield once remarked to a youth, "My young friend, your father has asked me to give you some advice, which may be of service to you all your life. Never, then, ask who wrote

the letters of Junius, or on which side of Whitehall Charles I was beheaded. For, if you do, you will be accounted a bore,—and that is something too dreadful for you at your tender age to contemplate.”

Junius we ignore to-day. As to elegant, tragic Charles, it is most probable that he stepped to his doom by a window at the north end of the Banqueting Hall and so along to the scaffold erected on the spot now marked officially as its site.

Under Charles the Merry, Whitehall reached its zenith. Its myriad roofs sheltered the whole establishment of the Court, public and private, male and female. Of Louise de K  rouaille, afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth, it is written that she caused her lodging to be thrice rebuilt ere it was to her taste. On the river bank dwelt the Castlemaine. One evening, with His Majesty to dine, she found the kitchen flooded and the fire out.

“Zounds,” cried she, “you may set the house on fire, but the beef shall be roasted.” They found an easier means by carrying the joint to the lodgings of “Mrs. Sarah’s husband.”

Old Pepys loved it all, of course. Staid Evelyn flourished a pious pen.

“I can never forget,” he deplored, “the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness, as it were, total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening), which I this sennight was witness of; the King sitting and

toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, Mazarine, etc., and a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery." Such was the setting in which the early Life Guards carried out their duties.

George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, Gerard of Brandon, and others of the Life Guards' senior officers, had quarters actually in the Palace. At the Guard House within the precincts one hundred Private Gentlemen stood watch and ward each day. There were no barracks, and, when not on duty, the Life Guards lived pretty much where and how they pleased, providing horse and arms were ready within the troop billeting area.

But the King's Life Guard itself stood ever ready. Whenever the King rode forth their trumpets sounded "To Horse." They jingled out to Newmarket, Epsom or Windsor. The key of the Royal Coach dangled at the end of the Captain's pouch-belt cord. Even to-day no Line cavalry wear such cords to their belts. They took their Master to hunt the deer at Richmond or even to shoot the duck in St. James's Park.

Cavaliers that they were, Charles's Guards modelled their behaviour on that of the Court they graced. The very Guard House hardly presented a picture of military perfection. Lilley, visiting it two years after the King came in, remarks: "I was had into the Guard Room,

which I thought to be hell; some therein were sleeping, others swearing, others smoking tobacco. In the chimney of the room I believe there were two bushels of broken tobacco-pipes, almost half one load of ashes."

Swords were light in the scabbard, and tempers quick. In 1679 two officers fought a duel in the court-yard over a gaming quarrel. A news-sheet of 1682, again, reports: "Two of the King's Horse Guards fell out upon the Guard and were soon so high in words that one called the other Oliverian," an insult indeed, when Charles II ruled the land.

You may note here, in parentheses, that there is no regimental association in the term 'Horse Guards' as applied to the building. In the early days, and for a century more, regimental titles were uncertain quantities. Men spoke of the Life Guard, the Life Guard of Horse, or the Horse Guards, quite indifferently. The present Royal Horse Guards, indeed, had no share in the naming of the building and only performed the duty as deputising for the Life Guards until, in the early nineteenth century, they became fully-fledged Household Cavalry.

Military history can surely present few instances of troops being eager to remain on guard. Yet in 1683 the King's and Queen's Troops nearly came to blows because the former refused to hand over the duties until their convenience could be suited.

Charles II died at Whitehall. James, his brother, left it, the last whiff of its glory blown away by the 'Protestant Wind.' He even refused to allow the Guard to fight for his Palace. Princess Anne, too, ran away from her lodgings in the Cockpit. It was, perhaps, the most romantic incident in her placid life. At her carriage window clattered the Bishop of London. He had doffed cassock, donned cuirass, and mustered a troop of horse for William, remembering that he was once Cornet Compton of the Earl of Oxford's Blue Horse.

From Kensington in 1698 little Dutch William watched the flames consume the house of the Stuarts. Only the Banqueting Hall remained to remind folk of the King over the Water. William was not ill-pleased. Kings and Queens since then have lived elsewhere. The Guard has remained steady through the centuries.

The position is not ill-chosen. To the west lie the Palaces—St. James's, Buckingham Palace (later), Kensington and Hampton Court. Close by, ever a focus spot of trouble, are the Parliament buildings. To the east and north is the spreading network of the Metropolis. London was police-less, and it could be a turbulent capital. Whitehall of the Georgian era assumed a tactical importance in times of civil stress.

The Guard was turned out on several occasions, but was used as sparingly as possible, owing to its paramount duty of personal service to the

Sovereign. It was very urgently required to deal with the Sacheverell riots. Orders to turn out were conveyed to the commander of the Guard, one Captain Horsey. The gallant gentleman refused to budge except under the Royal sign-manual. This was duly forthcoming, Queen Anne remarking, with praiseworthy piety, that, during the absence of the Guard, "God would be her Guard." Captain Horsey had one scruple more. The mob were showing episcopal zeal in the burning of dissenting meeting-houses. The captain had, apparently, some experience of magisterial methods. Was he required, he asked, to fight the mob, or to preach to them? If the former, why, then, fighting was his trade. If the latter, he begged that someone better qualified might be sent, as he esteemed himself but an indifferent orator. He was reassured, rode down with his men, and had a thoroughly happy evening, in which preaching played no part.

Until 1745 the old Guard House did duty. In that year the present buildings were commenced. Owing something in design to the previous erection, the present quarters were executed by Vardy to the plans of William Kent. The cost was £30,000. King George II passed under the completed archway for the first time in 1751. There was accommodation for horse and man on both sides of the court-yard. The King's Life Guard was still a considerable force. The central block was occupied by the Secretary



of State for War. That official, who in the mid-eighteenth century was still distinctly a 'civilian subordinate,' was afterwards ousted by the Commander-in-Chief, coming in from far-off Knightsbridge.

The room over the archway is still the 'Duke's Room.' It contains a bust of the great Duke of Wellington, who was for so many years the supreme authority in the military affairs of the nation. The daily arrival of the plain-looking old gentleman, mounted but in civilian clothes, was as much one of the sights as guard-changing itself.

Horse Guards, architecturally, has only during the last two decades emerged from a dingy smoke-cloud of criticism. Its vindication is ably set forth by the historian of the Household Cavalry.

"At a time," he writes, "when architecture—like most other arts—was at its lowest ebb, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was the fashion to level cheap sneers at the Horse Guards, denouncing it as the ugliest building in London. A better instructed taste has seen in the Horse Guards an extremely picturesque design, admirably proportioned, and infinitely superior in point of refinement to the neighbouring erections of a more modern period."

In spite of the reorganisation of the Life Guards in 1788, much of the slackness which had brought about the dismissal of the Private Gentlemen lingered in the manner of performing the guard

duties. So it was that, in 1801, a very thorough tightening-up took place. Determined orders were issued by Lord Cathcart, senior Gold Stick.

“The King’s Life Guard at Whitehall,” he wrote, “being considered a more alert duty than formerly, when it was mounted once in four days, and was more in the nature of an inlying picquet, the officers and men who compose the Guard must hold themselves in constant readiness for the most alert and expeditious performance of any duty, either of Compliment, or of actual Service, that may be required, without Ceremony of previous Notice.”

The Guard was composed, at that time, of three officers, a quartermaster—then a warrant officer—a trumpeter, two corporals of horse and forty-eight privates. Formed in two divisions it mounted for forty-eight hours. One did the sentry duty each day, while the other was responsible for stable duties and stood ready to act in emergency.

In addition to the sentries, mounted and dismounted, the Guard sent out mounted patrols into the neighbourhood each evening. Each division sent its orderly man for the day to St. James’s Palace, both orderlies attending on ‘Great Court Days.’ Two Household Cavalry sentries are still posted on the Grand Staircase at St. James’s on Levee Days, though they are not ‘found’ by the Guard at Whitehall.

The mounted orderlies who, under the guise of

'War Office Orderlies,' were provided from the Line regiment at Hounslow down to 1913, were the remnants of the old King's Letter Party. Before the advent of the railway, the Cavalry regiments at Windsor and Hounslow provided regular relays for the conveyance of the Court mail between Windsor, Hampton Court and London.

Under the Regency, and for many years later, escorts were still considered a necessity for every member of the Royal Family on the simplest occasions. Smaller escorts were actually found from the King's Life Guard, as all escorts had formerly been. Larger ones were made up by a technical reinforcement of the Guard. Thus it was that, down to 1922, when the number of regiments stationed in London was reduced from two to one, all escorts were found, if possible, from the regiment doing duty for the day at Horse Guards.

On the old forty-eight-hour Guard considerably more latitude was allowed than is customary to troops on Guard. Two men at a time were even allowed leave, for short periods. The bounds of the Guard covered the whole Parade, and allowed men "as far as the double sentry at Carlton Gardens at the end of the Mall." Both sides of Whitehall were likewise in bounds. Although seldom, if ever, exercised, men still have the privilege of walking, in full uniform, on any part of the Horse Guards Parade.

The officers of the Guard shared the hospitality of the Sovereign at the Mess in St. James's Palace, and still do. King Edward VII, as Prince of Wales and Colonel-in-Chief of the Household Cavalry, extended permission for them to visit the Marlborough Club.

It is not quite clear when the distinction of 'Short' and 'Long' Guards commenced. Under the last two Hanoverian monarchs and during the earlier part of the Queen's reign, the Guard quarters received an annual cleaning in the autumn. While this drastic ceremony was in progress, the Guard was reduced to two N.C.O.s and twelve men, the present strength of a 'Short' Guard. The remainder necessary to bring it to full strength was held in barracks as an inlying picquet. It eventually became the practice for an officer's, or 'Long' Guard to mount during the residence in London of the Sovereign, and for the Guard to be reduced when Her Majesty left Town.

In a recent conversation a serving soldier, realising that Queen Victoria, during her later years, was almost continuously out of London, came to the conclusion that the Household Cavalrymen of the day must have found life very easy. Too easy, in point of fact, to be true. The powers that were evolved the scheme of mounting a full Guard all the time Parliament was in session. The etiquette was, of course, entirely wrong. In no sense has the Guard ever been

mounted for the benefit of Lords or Commons, unless, indeed, to overawe them.

King Edward reintroduced the correct procedure. He ordered, furthermore, that the full Guard should mount if the Consort were in London alone. This is the present rule.

The strength of the Guard is now reduced even from its pre-War strength. The full Guard consists of a captain or subaltern, a 'corporal-major,' a 'corporal of horse,' two corporals, a trumpeter, and sixteen troopers. This is its actual marching strength, apart from which it has its own staff, most of whom were at one time included in the parade. The Guard is decreased or brought to its full strength at the actual time of their Majesties' leaving or arriving in Town.

Until comparatively recent years there was a Tilt Yard Guard provided from the Brigade of Guards mounted from the other side of the Horse Guards building, who were responsible for the Parade Ground. The two Guards were in the habit of exchanging hospitality, until it was stopped by the order "Disturbances having arisen in the Sutling Booth of the Foot Guards at the Tilt Yard between the men of different regiments, it is ordered that, in future, no man of the King's Life Guard shall go into the Tilt Yard, Passage leading to it, or Sutling House, on any pretence whatever." The Life Guard had always its own canteen, presided over until recently by an ex-Household Cavalryman, now conducted

by that never-failing ally of the soldier the N.A. & A.F.I.

It is often claimed, even in the Brigade, that the Guard has never been taken by a Line Cavalry regiment save in 1913, when the whole of the Household Cavalry mustered at Windsor for the Royal Review. The 19th Hussars on that occasion came up from Hounslow and mounted Guard for some days. The occasion was not, however, unique. The Royal Horse Guards mounted Guard during the period of the reconstruction of the Life Guards, although they were not then Household Cavalry proper. During the gorgeous post-Waterloo days reviews were the order, and the Life Guards were commonly relieved to take part in them by whatever Line regiment happened to be available.

The King's Life Guard is relieved, as most people know, at 11 a.m. each day, except on Sundays, when it relieves an hour earlier. Actually the men who jingle so imperturbably under the archway have been busy for many hours. They have been given twenty-four hours' official warning for Guard. The wise old soldier carries a duty roster in his head, and is rarely caught napping. In regimental parlance his work is divided into 'upstairs' and 'downstairs.' All cavalry barracks are built with the troop rooms immediately over the stables.

Grooming and saddlery cleaning are routine affairs, 'King's' or no 'King's.' Upstairs the

man for Guard has a really big job. That the public imagines a Lifeguardsman's boots to be of patent leather and his cuirass and sword of plate is unconscious tribute to his 'elbow grease.' The soldier has always been a conservative soul. Comparatively recently the Life Guards were still using blacking instead of boot polish. Even now they spurn the new-fangled preparations for whitening leather. Breeches, gauntlets and belts are still prepared with genuine pipe-clay, mixed in huge tubs after recipes whose secrets are fiercely guarded by generations of squadron storemen.

So many items go to the making of a complete review order for a Household Cavalryman that the trooper, before putting his cleaning rags away, will 'call the roll' on his kit to make sure that it is all there. It is unsafe to leave any job over for the morning.

The new Guard will be hard at it from reveille. Surely the troop horse must realise he is for Guard long before the white sheep-skin is flung over his saddle. He is groomed and brushed and generally titivated like a chorus queen in a beauty parlour. Every horse is passed fit for parade by the troop corporals of horse.

Boot and saddle, which sounds forty-five minutes before parade, finds the old soldier certainly saddled, and as far advanced towards being booted as the shaving glass. Five minutes before parade he will walk sedately downstairs

—with due care to his spurs—looking as if he had left a valet standing in his dressing-room.

Inspections? No buckle is left unturned that the King's Life Guard may be perfect. There are orderly corporals, Regimental Corporal Major, Adjutant and at times a Commanding Officer, maybe. The Guard parades dismounted and mounted. Inspection over, the four 'box-men,' or mounted sentries, are selected as the best turned-out and best-matched horses of the Guard. The Guard is formed and the Standard received—in the case of a 'Long' Guard, with a salute.

A full Guard marches as if expecting to be attacked at any moment. It is a tradition of the bad old days, when the King's enemies lurked at every corner. Advanced and Rear Guards are thrown out, each with connecting files. On arrival at Hyde Park Corner, and at the two Palaces, the points close in. The passings safely negotiated the Rear Guard faces about and stands ready to ward off all assaults until the main body is clear away. The Royal Salute is sounded on leaving barracks, on passing the Palaces, and on arrival at Horse Guards.

Every sightseer is familiar with the position of the sentries. There is an amusing if apocryphal legend of the sentry who stands at the entrance to the Guard quarters. Officially he is the "Sentry over the Guard Quarters and Stables." Semi-officially he is the "Sentry over the Arms," the old arm racks under the arch giving logic to



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the term. Colloquially he is the "Sentry over the Chicks," and his beat the 'Chicken Run.'

Horse Guards, as has been said, always had its resident canteen manager. It is related that, many years ago, one such kept chickens in the stable yard. No doubt their freedom had to be restrained. They would hardly have looked military in the front yard. A sentry on this particular post was once found asleep and taken in front of his Commanding Officer. When asked if he knew what his duties were he replied promptly that he was there to keep the canteen manager's chickens from straying. The story ought to relate that he 'got away with it' and lived happily ever after.

It is related furthermore that there used to exist, in the stable yard, a flight of wooden steps leading down from a window of the Paymaster-General's office. These were used by the clerks, in search of liquid nourishment in the Horse Guards canteen. Apparently the habit became too strong, for an order was issued forbidding them to enter the canteen, for the enforcement of which the Guard was required to post a sentry over the steps. The steps eventually, it is said, rotted away, but the sentry was forgotten, and for many years a soldier paced steadfastly in the stable yard, presumably in case a clerk, maddened by thirst, flung himself from the window.

In one respect there is a reminder that Whitehall is a remnant of a Royal Palace. On your

own feet only may you pass through Horse Guards. Attempt to do so on wheels, be they only the humble ones of a push-bike, and the sentries will burst from their calm. It is upon record, and fairly recent record too, that a zealous trooper, sword-flourishing, chased a daring butcher's boy out into the roadway. Fortunately the butcher's wheels were faster than the Lifeguardsman's jackboots, or another head might have rolled into the Whitehall dust.

Officers of State and Ministers of the Crown receive special passes giving His Majesty's permission to drive through Horse Guards. The great man who once forgot his pass shall be nameless. His car was halted and the chauffeur attempted to explain. The sentry "knew his job" and it was "more than his life was worth" and so forth. Eventually the car window slammed open and a head that all England knew shot out.

"Look here, man," snapped the head, "don't you know who I am? I'm the First Lord of the Admiralty." The sentry had heard many tall tales in his time and shot back :

"I can't help who you are. I'm the First Relief, Front Gate, and you don't come through here without a pass."

Gentlemen Pensioners, Private Gentlemen, Horse Grenadiers and Troopers—Whitehall has known them all. A Stuart died on its scaffold; a Stuart rode over the cobbles in triumph; a Stuart ran when the weathercock signalled a

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‘Protestant Wind.’ Cavalier hats, cocked hats, helmets and plumes have ridden under the echoing archway.

Three centuries of history unroll. Three centuries of loyal service march with jingle of spur and glory of royal scarlet or blue. Rumbling coaches, bobbing sedans, flaming motor-buses have ambled or scurried. All’s well in England. Whitehall is Royal yet.

## CHAPTER XIII

### “TOMMY THIS AND TOMMY THAT”

As lately as 1914 certain large sections of the civil population still imagined that the soldier was the scum of the earth. They too often forgot that the antics of the military on pay-night were by no means unique, but rather typical of the practice of the lower classes of the nation as a whole. Such antics certainly showed to greater effect where a regiment or battalion of young men were jointly concerned, than in civilian circles where high spirits were spread over a greater area, and fustian jackets made them less conspicuous.

Rudyard Kipling's lines were, in effect, still a true condemnation. Moved to hysterics by the soldier's gallantry in war-time, virtuous civilians were apt to pass by on the other side in peace-time. It was

“Tommy this and Tommy that,  
And, ‘Tommy, how's your soul?’  
But, ‘Thin red line of heroes’  
When the drums began to roll.”

And the antipathy was two and a half centuries old. It had its origin after Charles I had been executed, and England was parcelled out to the Major-Generals and their psalm-singing soldiery.

Charles II and succeeding monarchs built up their army in the face of the opposition of a nation that was sick of the military, when the very name 'soldier' brought up memories of oppression of the worst sort. The duties of the new-born army did not help to make it popular for its own sake.

The forces of law and order were miserably inefficient. The only resource of the magistrates was to 'call out the military,' which they did with the greatest regularity at the first sign of trouble. The aftermath of such callings-out was very often the sitting of a coroner's jury on the bodies of shot or sabred rioters, and the returning of a verdict of wilful murder from a packed jury bench.

London, in particular, was ever an unruly city, but the oddest job of work, surely, that our early regular soldiery were called upon to perform was in 1661, when the Ambassadors of Sweden, France and Spain arrived at the Tower Wharf. The representative of Sweden got safely off the mark, but their Excellencies of France and Spain set up a great effort for second place.

The gentlemen of the Spaniard's train gained a decided initial advantage. They first frightened the French coach-horses by shouting, and then hamstrung two of them. The bystanders, feeling themselves out of it, commenced flinging impartial half-bricks. The foreigners thereupon snatched at swords and pistols. The Life Guards, having been ordered to maintain a strict neutrality,

charged in among all and sundry. Great days in London when Charles was King.

To the troops frequently fell the duty of apprehending felons and ill-affected persons. This preliminary accomplished they would be called upon to guard the place of trial against the mob and finally to escort the condemned to execution. Troops, as has been seen, were few, and in 1662 we find a detachment of Life Guards sent all the way to Gloucestershire to destroy a crop of illicit tobacco. Down to 1810 the treasure for the Fleet was regularly convoyed from the Pay Office to Portsmouth by detachments of cavalry.

Charles II's reign was never free from sedition. Kent, Northampton, Nottingham and York were among the counties into which disciplinary excursions were made by the sadly harassed soldiery. Royal armies, Protestant armies, Dutch armies, disbanded soldiers and even Scots armies prowled in the land from 1685 to 1745, and out of it all was nourished the enmity between soldier and civilian that Cromwell had so well inaugurated.

The billeting problem made matters worse. With the Civil War fresh in their minds, but by no means impressed by its lessons, Charles II's officers were in the habit of giving billeting orders not merely on innkeepers as they were entitled by law to do, but on private citizens. In London, where the majority of the Guards were normally quartered, their presence was the more felt and resented.

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Each body had its own billeting area. Thus, in the Life Guards, the 1st or King's Troop occupied the Strand, St. Clements, Drury Lane, Holborn, St. Giles, Gray's Inn, Long Acre, Covent Garden and St. Martin's Lane. The 2nd or Queen's Troop was quartered in Horseferry, Millbank, Peter Street, Stable Yard, Petty France and St. James's Street. The Duke of York's Troop was in Tothill Street, King Street, Charing Cross, Haymarket, St. James's Market and Piccadilly.

In Ireland there were so few inns that the barrack system was in operation there from the first. That the necessity was also realised nearer home may be gathered from a newspaper extract of 1679. "His Majesty has lately ordered the fitting up of the Savoy in the Strand for a regiment of Foot Soldiers, and it is designed that Stables shall be built for the Horse in Leicester Fields and Hyde Park." The Horse Grenadiers from their formation found some accommodation in the Royal Mews at Charing Cross, but in all these places little more than guard houses, offices and headquarters were provided for. The majority of the men were still free to heighten the already hectic public-house life of London, and other places selected for military stations from time to time.

It is, however, interesting to note that in the "Stables in Hyde Park" we have the forerunner of the famous Knightsbridge Barracks, although not on the same site as that present massive pile.

The Horse Grenadiers kept the Royal Mews even after the Court had left Whitehall and the site was perpetuated in the St. George's Barracks, which housed, first Foot Guards and then the Central Recruiting Dépôt, down to the time of their demolition, early in the present century, to make way for the extension of the National Gallery.

The soldiery were as liable to fight among themselves as to exercise their prowess at the expense of the citizenry. Our present-day journalists have nothing so swashbuckling to chronicle as—"1681, April 15th, London. Three gentlemen of the Guards being drinking in a House in the Haymarket about 10 at night some Words arose between two of them insomuch that they fell to blows. But being parted one of them was shut out of the room, who waiting some time without, the unconcerned person went out to persuade him to be quiet; but all in vain, for he drew his sword, and the other following drew also his, whereupon they made several passes and wounded one another. But Mr. Price wounded Mr. Loggins so deep that he broke his sword to his very back-bone. Mr. Price, thinking he had killed him, fell down also crying 'He hath killed me,' whereupon the crowd immediately pressed into the house to look after the other; which Mr. Price perceiving, he immediately rose and made his escape, though much wounded."

Excise men were universally detested, but one



is moved to a state of compassion for Thomas Poole, who, in 1668, complained to His Grace of Albemarle that "being lately in the execution of his said office was violently assaulted and beaten and abused by John Crowder, one of his majesties Trumpeters belonging to Lord Hawley's Troope, who then alsoe used many Execrable oaths to bee the death of your Petitioner, and made two severall passes against him with his naked Rapier, to the exceeding great Damage of your Petitioner, who by the said outrageous accions of the said Crowder is Letted and hindered from his said Employment and dayly goes in Danger of his life." Unwelcome as our tax-gatherers still are, we have lost the habit of 'making passes' against them.

Duels were even more frequent in the early part of the eighteenth century, and the accounts of them are littered up and down the Press columns. The aggressions of the military against the civilian element rose on several occasions to positive highway robbery. The lover of blood and thunder may read with gusto in an account dated 1719 of "Mr. Davin, the famous Trumpeter of the 1st Tp. of Gds." who "fought a duel at the Red Cow behind St. Clements, in which he received 3 Wounds, two in the breast 7 inches each, one in the Belly 10 inches, yet they are not supposed to be mortal."

One hardly knows which side to take in the case of Francis Chandler. It is certainly annoy-

ing for a dashing trooper to be pestered by bailiffs. Yet Francis had his warning. In 1725 he made his first kill among the bailiffs and got off with a branding. Yet the very next year, being pressed for a miserable guinea due to his butcher, he swore at the bailiff, "damn him and he would pay it," and slaughtered the wretch out of hand. Wherefore he was convicted of murder. If the previous instances refer to the Guards, it must not be supposed that they were the only or even the worst offenders.

There was a most deplorable incident in 1726, when the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II, went down to inspect his own Guard, quartered somewhere near the Horse Guards, and found on this occasion by Cobham's Dragoons. Only three troopers answered the call, "and they drunk," being turned out by the officer commanding the King's Life Guard in the unexplained absence of their own officer. On the occasion when Kensington Palace was burgled the authorities looked in vain for military assistance, since most of the infantrymen on duty were too busy helping the thieves to escape.

The Civil authorities, dependent though they were on military assistance, could not rid themselves of the popular prejudice, and put every imaginable obstacle in the way of a smooth alliance.

On one occasion in 1735 the officers of the Blues detached at Putney, Fulham and Wandsworth

were constrained to complain that billets for men and horses were provided as much as a mile and a half apart. The Mayor of Southampton refused entry altogether to a regiment of Dragoons sent there; while in 1726 his Worship of St. Albans took passes from discharged soldiers, had the men whipped through the streets and then arrested as vagrants.

Such reprisals, assuming them to be such, brought counter-strokes. One officer in 1735, being refused legal accommodation, requisitioned and forcibly occupied the Town Hall of Cirencester as a guard house. Another placed the Recorder of Chester under lock and key. In 1734 two officers of the 31st Foot, incensed by the inhabitants of Trowbridge, took the somewhat novel revenge of making the town's principal clothier drunk and enlisting him as a private soldier.

Apart from his public duties, which so often brought him into conflict with the civilian and even official element, the character and behaviour of the soldier were not improved by the scale of punishments which were in force in the eighteenth century, and, in greater part, continued well into the nineteenth century.

Such punishments were brutal in the extreme, even in comparison with the Civil code of the day. Running the gauntlet was not extinct in early Georgian days, and the volleys of the firing-squad were heard almost daily in Hyde Park as deserters

met their doom. This sentence, when recruiting was at a low ebb, was sometimes commuted into service in a colonial corps, which was of itself so perilously like a death sentence that Civil magistrates often refused to commit deserters when apprehended.

Offenders against lesser articles of the military code were punished with hundreds of lashes on the bare back, administered before the regiment on parade. Other military criminals were picketed—suspended by one wrist from the branch of a tree with bare feet resting on a pointed stake. It was the infliction of this penalty on one of their number that caused even such a *corps d'élite* as the 1st Horse Grenadiers to mutiny at Maidstone in 1722. They were recalled to their duty by an appeal to their loyalty, an appeal ever safely made where British soldiers are concerned.

There was no severer disciplinarian than Wellington, and the code still in force during his command lent its very powerful aid. The court-martial books of the period make gruesome reading. By a general court-martial 1200 lashes could be ordered. Lesser sentences were at the disposal of regimental courts which exercised the disciplinary functions which to-day are those of a Commanding Officer.

It is difficult to get at the real opinion of the Duke of Wellington concerning the men who gave him his victories. He was apt to give vent to

very dangerous general statements, too often half-truths, delivered in the heat of the moment. These have been gravely recorded. The most famous example is his general order condemning the conduct of the Army on the retreat from Burgos. So manifestly unfair, and, in parts, so obviously untrue was it, that it cost him the good-will of the whole Army. Even a word of praise was, not infrequently, to be tempered with a sneer, as when he declared that the sergeants of the Guards were invariably drunk by eight o'clock in the evening, although they "got the work done first." This on the very occasion when he was holding their behaviour up as a pattern to the Army.

Certain it is that he was a lifelong upholder of the lash as a deterrent to crime. If he was hasty in assuming that the majority of his men had enlisted for drink, it was at least most unfortunately true that the military as a whole drank very heavily, and that not the comparatively harmless beer of a later age.

Many Commanding Officers were, however, and fortunately for their men's backs at all events, in disagreement with him. There were Peninsular regiments in which the lash was almost unknown, and at least one in which never a man came to a general court-martial throughout the war.

At the same time the military moralist might have pointed to the finest of all divisions, Crau-

ford's 'Light Bobs,' whose discipline was maintained by the severest means. Yet, with the peculiar sense of fairness which is a prominent trait of British military character, the men in the ranks almost invariably took their punishments as fairly earned, and therefore without malice. Men such as Crauford gained a rough popularity of their own. Individuals, and regiments as a whole, have been quick to resent distinction made by their superiors. Such resentment is illustrated in its most severe form in the refusal, at the end of the Peninsular campaign, of the Connaught Rangers to subscribe to the presentation made to General Picton by the 3rd Division, which he had commanded so ably.

No general, perhaps, ever received such tribute as did Crauford on the day of his funeral, during the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. One of his strongest insinuations was that nothing should force a column to deviate from its line of march. It is recorded that the 95th Rifles, on returning from his burial, encountered a deep and muddy pool in their path. The leading files looked at the water, then squared their shoulders, lifted their chins and marched inexorably forward as if still at the grim heels of their dead taskmaster.

Such men, hardened by the usages of war, brutalised by the severity of the code under which they had fought, took unkindly to garrison life in England, and were even prone to regard the civilian as their lawful prey. Police there were

none, and barracks were still almost non-existent.

London particularly was still, at the close of the eighteenth century, deficient in barracks. The higher pay of the Life Guards was partly due to the men being put to the expense of providing their own lodging. In 1796, however, the first Knightsbridge Barracks on the present site were built, and an insanitary den near Portman Square was leased for the second cavalry regiment of the Metropolitan garrison. Men in barracks slept two in a wooden bunk, with two more men tucked in above them. It was only late in his long career that the Duke of Wellington himself announced to a somewhat dubious House of Lords that every single soldier of the Queen had an iron cot to himself.

Meanwhile the military authorities were unable to do right in the eyes of the nation, even when they did build barracks for the better regulation of their somewhat unruly dependents. What a storm there was in 1812 when the building of Regent's Park Barracks for the Household Cavalry was announced. They were to replace, as a cavalry station, the leased buildings in King Street, Portman Square, which were later handed over to the Foot Guards.

Press and Parliament together rose in alarm. Mr. Huskisson apprehended an attempt at "splendour and awkward magnificence—something between a palace and a stable." Those

who knew the result, until post-bellum reforms made themselves appreciated, had decided views as to which end of the scale was reached.

Sir Francis Burdett joined the fray with personal reminiscences of clashes with the military, while Mr. Freemantle ranted about the establishment of a “ Prætorian Camp in London.” The *Pilot* newspaper, “ in a constitutional point of view,” regarded them “ with an eye of jealousy, considering them capable of being, if not altogether likely to be, converted into so many fortresses of the Crown, formidable to the freedom of the people.” The writer of the *Pilot* has at least one merit. He refuses the people a capital letter.

Yet the presence of an armed force in the capital was more than ever necessary at the period under review and that which was to follow. But two years before all this pother, to quote but one instance, the same Sir Francis Burdett had, on a military discussion as it happened, been found guilty by the Commons of a breach of privilege, and ordered by the Speaker to be arrested. The bold gentleman announced his intention of resisting, and the mob assembled gleefully outside his Piccadilly residence. Life Guards were called out and the Riot Act read from the back of a troop horse. Sir Francis sat calmly in the bosom of his family eating his dinner the while.

The War Office played its part really well. Every



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regiment within one hundred miles received orders to march on London. After two days' hesitancy on the part of the Civil power the miscreant's door was forced and he was conveyed to the Tower in tip-top style by two regiments of cavalry, through streets lined by Foot Guards.

It was when the military returned from their stern duty that excitement really rose high. Mud and brick-bats are most annoying missiles, and the troops, after much provocation, opened fire. Two men were shot on Tower Hill and several persons wounded by pistol balls and sabres in Mark Lane. It was not until a much later occasion that the Life Guards were dubbed the 'Piccadilly Butchers.' Yet neither military nor civilians, but the system which set them against one another, was to blame that such bad feelings existed.

A few years later, in 1780, there had been that right royal rumpus the Gordon Riots. The riots have left their own picturesque legacy in the officer, three N.C.O.s and twenty-four men of the Brigade of Guards who march down solemnly every evening to take charge of the Bank of England.

Although the military protection was definitely applied for by the Governors of the Bank, the City trembled for its freedom, and used every means to get the picquet discontinued. It may be admitted at once that the military, a little cock-a-hoop at being given a legal advantage over

their hereditary enemies, took steps to carry out their duties in the City in a thoroughly high-handed manner.

Although it is to be hoped that the daily march of the troops was not quite so horrific as it is depicted in Gillray's cartoon, it is certain that they caused great confusion in the narrow streets, marching stolidly along the footway and jostling all who came in their way. After one Guardsman had actually used his bayonet to some effect, the Court of Aldermen, in 1788, petitioned the Bank to discontinue the guard and received the noble answer that the Directors "deemed a guard established from the King's own Guards a greater security than any private Guard."

The Lord Mayor elect, Alderman Pickett, a fulminating gentleman, excelled himself in protests, petitions, and proclamations. When he at last ascended the bench of Dick Whittington he set out on an evening in 1790, attended by all his Mayoral train, to obstruct the passage of the Bank picquet. If he had hoped for martyrdom he was grievously disappointed, for he was merely "shoved off the footway by the Commanding Officer without any further ceremony." The citizenry were eventually brought to their senses by a threat that, if the troops were any more hindered in their duty, the Bank would be transferred to Somerset House, outside the City area.

Space prevents a full history of the Bank picquet. The small force has been a very real

deterrent on more than one occasion. The Directors have invariably shown themselves sensible of the necessity of the soldiers by their generous treatment of them. Indeed, on one occasion, the Field Officer in Brigade Waiting, with more eloquence than is customary in military offices to-day, wrote that "the effusion of liberality when continued for any length of time is too apt to raise expectations in minds very prone to forget that what they receive is merely a Gratuity flowing from the Spring of beneficent Minds, venting itself in munificence," and much more to the same effect.

Fortunately for the Guardsmen of to-day, the Directors were not too much overawed by this flow of rhetoric. At all events the munificence continues unchecked to the present day. Every soldier is paid for his duty at the Bank, while the officers receive each a dinner and one guinea, paid by custom to a Brigade charity. The picquet has the privilege, unique in the Service, of going on duty by train in wet weather.

Oddly enough, in some ways, all troops were normally withdrawn from neighbourhoods in which elections were taking place. Possibly these were regarded as private wars, which the bourgeoisie might enjoy without let or hindrance. Even the Bank picquet was withdrawn at such times, its place being taken by armed clerks. London troops were called upon to march out into the wilds of Finchley or Barnet while the

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men of Marylebone or Westminster cracked skulls and threw eggs to their hearts' content.

In all seriousness, such action had the very happy effect, almost unparalleled abroad, of lifting the military completely above the sordidness of party politics. One is tempted to be proud of the fact that the soldier has maintained his lofty standpoint even to-day, when he has actually a vote to himself.

For a parallel to conditions of life in general since the Great War, the student turns automatically to the post-Waterloo era. The claim that history is the one study of all others giving full value for time and labour spent is here strongly supported. A would-be prophet could have foretold almost every turn of the wheel since 1918, merely by turning the pages of a history book. Preliminary trade booms, deflations, inflations, gluts, famines, over-machining of industry, all were most faithfully foreshadowed by the events which followed the fall of the Emperor Napoleon.

We have differed, at any rate in this country, in the method of dealing with refractory workmen. On the few occasions since peace was signed on which the troops have been called out at all, the move has hardly been more than a caution, and tact has been employed on all sides. In the earlier instance the troops rarely left their quarters without drawing blood.

As soon as a palpitating magistrate could be

persuaded to read the Riot Act the troops hurled themselves into the fray with great gusto. The memory of the famous 'Peterloo Massacre' lingers yet. Troops were employed in many places, in Hampshire, Kent, Sussex and the North, where the shifting and reorganisation of industry made workmen particularly bitter.

London, of course, lived up to its reputation, but it was not an industrial question that brought about London's most scandalous riots of the post-Waterloo era. The ordinary Londoner did not at first take sides to any violent extent in the long matrimonial dispute between King George IV and Queen Caroline. The sufferings, real or fancied, of the foolish, if not actually immoral, lady did, however, turn the scale in her favour towards the end of her life. No one can be more morbidly sentimental than your Cockney, and when the Queen died in August 1821, London, official as well as popular, decided to give her a really good funeral procession. She was, as a matter of fact, to be buried in Brunswick in accordance with her own wish. But whereas the responsible authorities had decreed that the cortège from Brandenburg House should pass discreetly round the north of the town, the citizens themselves were determined that it should pass directly through the City.

The procession received its first check when it attempted to turn into Church Street, Kensington. Pavings had been torn up, barricades erected,

and even the water mains opened. There was a hasty consultation. A reinforcement of Blues clattered up to assist the Life Guards who were doing escort duty. Church Street being impossible the funeral party moved along the outside of the Park, trying in vain to gain entrance at each gate, until it reached Hyde Park Corner.

Here the troops did effect a passage to Cumberland Gate, killing two civilians in the process. They passed along the Marylebone Road, until, meeting with a solid barricade a hundred yards deep, the head of the procession was forced down the Tottenham Court Road, in which every street that led off eastward was barricaded in succession. Thus the sadly jostled remains of the unfortunate Queen arrived in the City after all, to be received in State by the Lord Mayor.

A packed jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against the soldiers in connection with the two men killed at Cumberland Gate. This failed to worry the troops, who were a good deal more concerned because well-meaning folk took up a subscription on their account. A regimental committee of the 1st Life Guards, presided over by their corporal-major, refused payment for the performance of a public duty and made over the money to the Duke of York's School.

Whether on pleasure or on mischief bent the mob seems to have been equally dangerous. When, in 1832, new colours were presented to the Grenadier Guards in Hyde Park, troops keeping

the ground were warned to show "the greatest forbearance. The men must be strictly cautioned against striking any individual whatever, or allowing their horses to trample on anyone. The men must not attend to any personal abuse that may be levelled at them, nor must they mind any missile that may be thrown at them."

Sir Robert Peel commonly receives all the credit for the formation of the Metropolitan Police. Yet it was a theme on which the old Duke of Wellington preached continuously for many years. He saw many riots, and was even the target of some of them. On the occasion of the Cato Street conspiracy he laid out London with all the precision of a battlefield. Yet he realised that there were more tactful and possibly more successful ways of bringing a mob to reason than by the persuasion of bullet and steel. As a soldier, moreover, he deplored the necessity of scattering in small bodies military who would be better employed training for real war. Peel reaped where the great Duke had sown.

With the establishment of an efficient police force one of the main grievances against the military was removed. It is hard to realise, from the attitude, not only of the mob, but of responsible citizens, that the troops had been employed solely in the interests of law and order.

There now only remained the tradition which automatically classed every soldier amongst the dregs of society. He was, in the mass, no user of the velvet glove, although in fairness it must be

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claimed that the country as a whole was a pretty rough place. One does not need to be very old, for that matter, to remember hectic nights when every corner having its own public-house had its own fight on the pavement. A hundred years ago matters were far worse, and the whole-hearted way in which the soldiery helped on these social occasions did not increase their popularity, the more so since their superior physique and staunch loyalty to their clan made them almost invariably the victors.

In garrison towns stand-up fights between hostile regiments were not infrequent. Regiments cherished traditions of hatred no less faithfully than their alliances. Even within recent memory, where two regiments known to be the reverse of friendly were forced, on manoeuvres, to share a canteen, one found men of each kept strictly to right or left of a central gangway, with picquets patrolling in between.

Fights between soldiers could be serious enough, but they were generally handled by the military police or the picquets. When trouble arose between soldiers and civilians, things were more complicated, since the military had an ineradicable dislike of interference by the Civil police.

In 1843 the Duke of Wellington addressed a series of circulars on the subject to Commanding Officers. He discouraged the use of public-houses altogether, since most regiments had their canteens, or 'sutling houses'—a typical example of the survival of old terms in military language.



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He laid down very strongly the duty of Commanding Officers, and, two years later, issued a characteristic condemnation of officers who had ventured to grant indulgences to their men.

“ Fresh instances having occurred,” he says, “ of Quarrels and Affrays between the Troops and the Inhabitants of the towns in which they are quartered, the Commander-in-Chief deems it necessary to call the attention of Commanding Officers to the Orders and directions on this subject, and desires that night passes may in no case be granted to the Non-Commissioned Officers and Men either for the purpose of attending theatres, Exhibitions or on any other pretence so long as Disputes or ill-feeling are known to exist between the Troops and any Class of the Inhabitants, or when there is any reason to apprehend disturbance of the Public Peace, by their coming into collision.

“ His Grace reminds Commanding Officers that they cannot be answerable for the Discipline and Conduct of Men who are habitually permitted to be out at Night in the Towns in which they may be quartered. The practice of granting such indiscriminate Indulgence must therefore be discontinued.”

Fortunately for the grand old warrior's peace of mind, it was not until some time after his death that any private soldier was allowed to wear plain clothes. The first regiment, so far as the writer can trace, to introduce such a revolutionary measure was the 1st Life Guards. With due

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respect to its own prestige, even the troopers fared forth in dignified top-hat, frock-coat and ' varnished ' boots.

Before the arrival of the present century the whole of the Household Cavalry Brigade had the ' plain clothes ' privilege, and, with the exception of recruits and men undergoing punishment or loss of privilege, every man was in possession of a permanent pass allowing him to remain out of barracks until Reveille. In other branches of the service plain clothes were worn by sergeants only, and permanent leave was granted until midnight only.

The improvement came, to a great extent, from within. The soldier, healthily disciplined as he is, at an age when any man needs discipline, responded inevitably to such treatment. It is a common belief that Household Cavalry recruits are drawn from superior classes. Certainly the very greatest care is taken in the selection of applicants. But the main explanation of the reputation that they have held for many years lies in the way in which they have been trusted. Only since the War have the generality of soldiers been granted the privilege of wearing plain clothes off duty, and late leave has been granted on more liberal lines.

The results come up to sanguine expectations. If the behaviour of the country as a whole is better, that of the Army is improved beyond all knowledge.

One more factor has played a leading, perhaps

the greatest part in removing the bar between civil and military—the War of 1914–18. Previously, the Army, if not a caste—and ‘military’ families were, and are, very common—was at least a class apart. The World War brought into being the first ‘citizen army’ that Britain had ever known. Every family realised its duty towards the State by sending its sons to fight; every house mourned its dead.

No longer would proud neighbours offer sympathy because the son of a house had ‘gone for a soldier.’ It was the proudest boast of all—or would have been had it not been so common an occurrence. The country gloried in the deeds, not of a professional, but of its very own Army, deeds in which it really felt it had its share. Tradition dies hard. It took the War to break down, fully, the bad old tradition. Many years of peace have done nothing to weaken the new tradition, which is made enduring by a new Army. A soldier is no more than a worthy young citizen, doing his duty towards King and State in the closest manner in which it is possible to perform it. He was never worse than his fellow. Perhaps he is now no better. Good, in as great a degree as evil, shows to higher effect in the mass. Four or five hundred men, most of them in the first flush of youth, well-trained, ruled with a beneficent discipline, members of one unit, are a proud sight, and a very worthy model to the community which gives them shelter.

## CHAPTER XIV

### POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

THE roll of a drum, the flaunt of gold on a crimson banner, the glint of steel,—“there’s something about a soldier.” The pageantry of which the Army is a colourful trimming, or even the centre, has been much reduced within living memory. The time has long since passed when military show about a royal personage had the stern necessity of personal safety at its core. British monarchs of later days are safely enthroned in a nation’s heart, and guarded by its love. The troops of not so many years ago, gay in the uniforms which were then their only wear, had the iron fist very firmly clenched within the velvet glove. Every crowd had its hidden malcontent, and wholesale rebellion was often not far away.

Mention has been made in another chapter of the state duties of the Household Cavalry, centred in the Guard at Whitehall, and of the heavy escort duties they were in earlier times called upon to perform. Even in the great Queen’s reign there was no Royal engagement so small as to be performed without an escort. Within recent memory the Life Guards have clattered through gas-lit

streets to the Opera or Theatre, and waited patiently for the curtain to fall, so that they might complete their duty.

Cavalry escorts are laid down at varying strengths. There is, first of all, the full 'Sovereign's' or 'Field Officer's' Escort. Used on great occasions of State only, the Sovereign's Escort is of four troops of twenty-four rank and file, each with its corporal of horse and officer, with serrefiles, farriers, trumpeter and standard. It is 'found' for their Majesties or for visiting royalties and heads of States.

For lesser occasions for their Majesties, or for the Prince of Wales, there are two different 'Captain's Escorts'—with or without standard. On yet other occasions a 'Travelling Escort' may be found, of two officers and fourteen other ranks. For great State ceremonies, such as the Opening of Parliament, it will be necessary to provide a Sovereign's Escort, a Captain's Escort for H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, an escort for the Regalia, and a dismounted party for the Staircase of the House of Lords, a severe strain on the one cavalry regiment which is now left to do duty in London. There was formerly an escort provided to bring the State Coach from the old Royal Mews in Pimlico to the Palace. One other escort still appears in the Cavalry Drill Book. The Speaker of the House of Commons is entitled to a personal bodyguard of one trooper, the spectacle of whom, cantering boldly along behind the Speaker's

motor-car, would do much to enliven the prosaic streets of to-day. The last time that the historic 'King's Champion' appeared in Westminster Hall, at the Coronation of King George IV, he was supported by a dozen Life Guardsmen.

The cutting down of the Household Cavalry in 1922 was responsible for the abolition of the mounted Guard of Honour which used to take post in the Forecourt of Buckingham Palace on State occasions. There are no longer 'Street Parties' of cavalry blocking the ends of the larger roads debouching on to the Royal route. The arrival of the horsemen used to provoke great complaint among the spectators who imagined they had found a point of vantage. Vocal remonstrance was at least once supported by a hat-pin assault on the rump of a horse, whose heels speedily made room for another spectator, however restricted the view. The traditional right of the Household Cavalry to do duty actually within the Royal Palaces is maintained by the posting of two troopers on the staircase of St. James's or Buckingham Palace for such functions as Courts, State Balls or Levees.

One has only to turn back the order books to see how very much heavier the duties used to be in London. Such an occasion as the visit of the Emperor and Empress of the French in April 1855 kept the troops busy for a week or more, while Royal weddings, such as that of the Princess Royal with the Crown Prince of Prussia, would

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entail separate escorts of varying magnitude for endless royalties. Such great occasions would often entail the bringing into London of one or more Line Cavalry and Infantry regiments to assist the Guards.

Escort duties outside the capital are few, and usually performed by whichever Cavalry regiment happens to be most convenient. There have, however, been several occasions in the present century when Household Cavalry escorts have gone out to grace a special Royal occasion. In 1900 a joint Sovereign's Escort was provided by the 1st and 2nd Life Guards to escort Queen Victoria to Dublin, while in the year 1903 a Sovereign's Escort of the 2nd Life Guards proceeded to Edinburgh with King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Only one other escort left London from the Household Cavalry during the reign of King Edward, in 1909, when the 1st Life Guards sent an escort to Knowsley Park, Lancashire, for the Presentation of Colours to the Lancashire Territorials. The same escort accompanied their Majesties to Manchester and Birmingham. In the year of the Coronation of their present Majesties escorts were sent by the 1st Life Guards to Dublin and by the 2nd Life Guards to Caernarvon for the Investiture of the Prince of Wales. Both these were full escorts, while from the latter travelling escorts accompanied their Majesties to Bangor and Aberystwyth. There has been one Household Cavalry

escort only outside London since the War, the Travelling Escort furnished by the 1st Life Guards on the occasion of the opening of the new Civic Hall at Leeds, by His Majesty the King, in August 1933.

The Life Guards have, on occasion, been used even farther afield. During the Regency we find a small party going out to Morocco in charge of a number of English horses which were the gift from the Prince Regent to the Sultan of that place. When the Prince Consort attended the French Army manoeuvres of 1854 he was attended by a corporal of horse and two troopers as orderlies. It is recounted that the corporal of horse, who was one of the champion swordsmen of the Army at the time, won fame for Britain by his displays of swordsmanship during his stay amongst the Poilus. When, in 1900, his present Majesty, then Duke of York, went to Australia to inaugurate the Commonwealth, he was attended by a detachment of Household Cavalry. Finally, the position of the Household Cavalry near the Royal person was insisted upon when the King and Queen went to India for the Coronation Durbar of 1911. They were attended by the Silver Stick in Waiting, H.S.H. the Duke of Teck, and by a corporal-major from each of the three regiments.

London's chiefest daily show is the Guard Mounting ceremony of the Brigade of Guards. For the greater comfort of the uninitiated who never know whether to go to St. James's or

Buckingham Palace, we may mention that the Guard is changed at Buckingham Palace—‘ Buck House ’ to the Brigade—when their Majesties are in residence, and at St. James’s when they are out of Town.

Guards in London are furnished each day by one of the four ‘ West End Battalions.’ These are the battalions of the Brigade of Guards stationed at Chelsea and Wellington Barracks. Here, as in the case of the King’s Life Guard, the duty, although generally performed by the Guards, has not been strictly confined to them. Indeed it has been a common practice for a Line battalion to take the duty for a few weeks every autumn while the 4th Guards Brigade is on manœuvres. The Guard, whether mounted at St. James’s or at Buckingham Palace, is termed the King’s Guard.

State Duties in the Brigade are regulated by the “ Field Officer in Brigade Waiting,” a battalion commander by roster, who has been responsible, from the reign of Queen Anne, for conveying the monarch’s orders to the Brigade. The regiments of the Brigade have the extra distinction of possessing each a Regimental Lieutenant-Colonel, who is, as a matter of fact, a full colonel, and by custom the commander of a Territorial Infantry Brigade in London. The full colonelcies of the Guards Regiments have always been considered among the highest distinctions, and at the moment three members of the Royal Family are included

in the list. The Duke of Connaught, senior Field-Marshal, commands the Grenadiers, the Duke of York the Scots, and the Prince of Wales the Welsh.

Of the four West End battalions, one each day is the "Battalion finding Public Duties." From it are found the Guards for the two Palaces—which are, in point of fact, one Guard—the Central London Recruiting Depôt, the Magazine in Hyde Park, and the Picquet for the Bank of England. The magnificent bands of the Brigade do duty for Guard Mounting on a roster of their own.

All Public Duties for the day, except the Bank Picquet, are paraded, inspected, and marched off together. They march, not in the familiar 'fours' of the normal infantry column, but in divisions of six men and a N.C.O. abreast. The two small Guards for the Recruiting Depôt and the Magazine break off on their own route as convenient for the march.

Four officers and forty-nine other ranks go to make the King's Guard. There is a slight reduction if the King is away, and an increase to provide sentries for York House when the Prince of Wales is in London. There were also sentries for Marlborough House during the lifetime of Queen Alexandra. Guard Mounting takes place at 10.30 a.m. at Buckingham Palace or at 10.45 a.m. at St. James's. Most people remember the terrible occasion when the Guard mounted in the wrong Palace and had to be recalled by the Police.

The ceremony of Guard Mounting is as old as

### *SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER*

the standing army, for it was certainly taking place in the reign of Charles II, and was carried out down to 1862 in the old Colour Court at St. James's. Structural alterations then made it necessary to transfer the ceremony to the Friary Court, but in the Colour Court may still be seen the old 'Colour Post' in which the Colour was rested while the sentries were being posted. A King's Colour is carried if the Mounting is at 'Buck House,' a regimental one at St. James's. In the Brigade of Guards only, be it noted, is the rank of Ensign still maintained in place of the more normal Second Lieutenant.

It was long the custom for an officer of the Guard to be promoted Major when a child was born to the Sovereign. The Lieutenant of the Guard received the promotion when Queen Victoria's heir was born in 1841, but not without controversy. It happened that the future King Edward VII was born at 10.48 a.m., when Guard Mounting was actually in progress, and there was much discussion as to which Guard was entitled to claim the privilege.

The ceremony, with so many sentries to be changed at two separate palaces, is a long one. The new Guard arrives, its 'divisions' left form and halt, facing the old Guard. Then commences the stately slow march for which each of the five regiments has its own music.

In the Grenadiers the march from Handel's nearly forgotten opera 'Scipio' is used, presented,

so 'tis said, by the composer himself. The Coldstream goes to Mozart for inspiration, taking a march from 'Figaro.' Scots, Irish, and Welsh are strictly national, with 'The Garb of Old Gaul,' 'Erin go bragh' and 'Men of Harlech.'

The Bank Picquet has been discussed elsewhere in these pages. You may see yet another scrap of history when the Picquet marches into the City with bayonets fixed. Now in all our Army there are few who have that right. The right of the brigade has been extended only in recent years from the Grenadier Guards, who themselves gained it by reason of the fact that their third battalion was Cockney in origin. The Buffs were, of course, descended from certain of the old City Trained Bands, and the original Royal Marines were largely raised in London. The remaining regiment entitled to the honour is the Royal Fusiliers, who not only was the garrison of the Tower of London, but is the City of London Regiment.

. . . . .

Perhaps the most famous of all military ceremonies, and surely the most beautiful, is the Trooping of the Colour, which takes place on or near the King's Birthday each year, on the Horse Guards Parade, in the presence of His Majesty.

Curious historians have persisted in searching for a hidden origin of the ceremony. The milder among them have found a royal Commander-in-

Chief, who, dissatisfied with the slackness of the Guards, instituted the great parade as a means of smartening their drill. The sterner moralists have maintained that the stately ceremony, with its slow marching and rigidly dressed lines, was merely a test of sobriety.

While we do not attempt to deny that regiments, even Guards regiments, have at times grown slack, any more than we would maintain that never a Guardsman has mounted guard with a sore head, the origin of the Parade is neither so significant nor sinister. The 'Trooping' is, indeed, nothing more nor less than 'Guard Mounting' elaborate to the 'nth' degree of perfection. Horse Guards Parade was always the centre of affairs military in London, and, when barracks were non-existent, the absence of parade grounds made it necessary for the whole of the Public Duties for the day to be paraded centrally. The actual ceremony of Trooping the Colour is very ancient, and was connected with the bringing of a regiment's colours from their lodging-places, which were normally the officers' billets, on to the regimental parade.

Barrack squares eventually gave elbow-room in proper quarters for the daily guard parade, and, certainly by the middle of the last century, the 'Trooping' had become an annual ceremony in honour of Her Majesty's Birthday, not, indeed, in her presence, but for inspection by the Commander-in-Chief. It is significant that orders for the ceremony emanated from the Adjutant-General's

Department, which gave it a routine rather than a State atmosphere.

To-day it is the 'Colour'—strictly in the singular—which is trooped. Original orders were just as emphatically in the plural, for the Queen's Guard of Household Cavalry paraded with its Standard on the right of the line. To-day the detachment of Household Cavalry parading is a detachment simply, and has no connection with the Guard, although it carries a standard. The detachment of modern times wears 'Review Order' and not 'King's Guard Order,' which, while it will convey little to the civilian, is significant to the military man.

To-day the Guard which is being mounted is supported by guards from the rest of the Brigade to a total number of eight, found, as far as possible, from the 'Flank' companies. The parade is commanded by the Field Officer in Brigade Waiting. The Colour to be trooped is stationed to the front of the left flank of the line, whence it is taken by the Sergeant-Major to be received by the Ensign. On giving up his charge the Sergeant-Major draws his sword, this being the only occasion on which an infantry sergeant-major is permitted to brandish naked steel.

The whole colourful ceremony would take too long to explain in this place, and the technical detail takes up many pages of print in standing orders. All is perfection when the Household Brigade is on parade. There is an inspection of



the line by His Majesty, the 'Troop' itself, the March Past in slow and quick time, down to the final march to Buckingham Palace with the Sovereign and Colonel-in-Chief of the Brigade taking his post at the head. The whole picture is perfectly filled in by the inspired and majestic playing of the Massed Bands.

On this parade, be it noted, you may hear one of the old calls drubbed on the drum, a call older than the Regular Army. The ceremony proper, after the inspection of the line, is commenced by a solitary drummer beating the 'Drummer's Call.'

Trooping, or, more correctly, the King's Birthday Parade, has overflowed very widely from the Horse Guards Parade. Almost every garrison now expresses its loyalty in a Birthday Parade, those in foreign stations having gained in prominence since the War. There is once more, as there was for many years before the War, a permanent station for a battalion of Guards in Egypt, and the parade of the Cairo Garrison on the Birthday, even in drill clothing, yields nothing in precision to its pattern in London. In 1933, by the way, a 'Fly Past' of the Royal Air Force at Cairo formed part of the ceremony for the first time in history.

Recently a modified version was carried out by Foot Guards at Khartoum. The parade was held in the comparative cool of the early morning, and the troops paraded in shirt-sleeves. When,

during the troubles of a few years back, the presence of Guards at Shanghai prompted a parade on that station, Sappers prepared the way for the parade by removing Shanghai's only hill in wheelbarrows.

Outside London great military ceremonials are few to-day. Very occasionally there is a review at Aldershot. Regiments have their own occasions for ceremonial parades, and make the most of them. There is a Guard mounted daily at Windsor Castle, and at Government House, Aldershot, and Balmoral whenever His Majesty is in residence. The Tower of London, of course, has its Guard, mounted from the battalion which is its normal garrison.

Hampton Court has been without sentries since the War only. The provision of its Guard was one of the numerous 'odd jobs' which the cavalry regiment at Hounslow was called upon to perform. The barracks at Hampton Court and also, earlier, those at Kensington, were occupied by detachments from that regiment. It was from Hounslow also that the Household Cavalry received assistance on State occasions, and before the coming of the railway the regiment there assisted in the escorting of the monarch between London and Windsor.

There have been those, and they many, who have been unable to reconcile the parade side of the Army with its sterner duty. The fact is that, when ceremonial was at its highest, such work was the finest possible training for wars in which

the main requisite among the troops was steadiness on parade. Such unyielding firmness is more than ever necessary to-day, allied to elasticity, intelligent co-operation and fire-power. In all these directions the Army has generally been super-efficient, even when 'spit-and-polish' has been, in the eyes of its critics, over-emphasised.

It is hard to imagine how such troops as the Guards can ever have been termed, as they were termed for so long, 'feather-bed soldiers.' The Great War put a term to this, as it did to many another fiction. The arrival, as spick and span as on London Streets, of the Foot Guards on a scene of action, was ever a cause for the uplifting of weary hearts. Their colours are the more gloriously heavy for the ten 'Great War Battle Honours.' But even before 1914 the regiments of His Majesty's Guards were ever as ready and proficient to uphold their Sovereign's prestige in the field as they were to decorate, and protect, his Court at home.

Study of history reveals much. Time and again the Guards have turned their backs on the glowing affairs of State to become the very spear-head of Britain's might. Once at least they were the spear itself, in the absence of any other force fit to take the field. The Household Cavalry have, by the very nature of their personal service, been less frequently in the field, and there have been many campaigns in the course of our Empire

building where cavalry have been very little, if at all used. But they, too, have left their mark.

"Believe me, sir," wrote Sir Garnet Wolseley, a former stern critic of their worth, in 1881 to the Duke of Cambridge, "these Household Cavalrymen are teaching me a lesson. I wish we had more of them." They have 'taught lessons' before and since. They were the 'properest horse' of King William III, as they were sufficiently proper foot in 1914 when they alone stood between the might of Germany and the Channel ports. History proved that they stood to some purpose. On the return of the troops from the Egyptian campaign where Wolseley had been taught his lesson, it is worth noting that the German Ambassador (Count Munster) reported to the Emperor that the horses of the Household Cavalry returned in better condition than those of any other regiment.

A scrawl in 'copying' pencil still exists to show what their Brigadier (Broadwood) thought of them in South Africa. "I miss you all greatly," he wrote, "and never wish to see a better regiment. I remember apologising after I got command of the Brigade for giving the Household Cavalry rather more than their fair share of work; but, as I explained then, they always did everything well and never raised any difficulties."

"I told Sir Douglas Haig," wrote Lord Cavan in 1914, "and will tell Sir John French to-morrow, that I want no finer troops than you."

The moral, if one is needed, is that ceremonial and parade work is, and always will be, an essential part of training for war. Kitchener's men were often driven, during their long months of training and waiting, to wonder if it were worth while being chased round parade grounds by despairing sergeant-majors and devoted old colonels. They realised, as their enemies were made to realise, that 'Stand Still' is a great motto, properly applied and learnt. As for the eternal 'button stick,' it, too, is a mighty weapon of war.

Although, as has been said earlier in this chapter, Birthday Parades have become more popular abroad since the War, the following extract from a New York paper describing a Birthday Parade in Montreal in 1863 is amusing, showing as it does the touch of jealousy remaining from a rebellion and a war, and also, incidentally, how far the amateur may be deceived into thinking that parade troops cannot also be used for the rough and tumble of war.

"Her Majesty's Birthday," says the account, "was celebrated on Monday and was made a festival very much like a 4th of July in reduced circumstances. There was a parade and a review, and a portion of that was as fine as it is possible for a military parade to be. The Montreal Volunteer Infantry was decidedly so-so, the Volunteer Artillery was better, but the Brigade of Guards was splendid. This organisation is made up of the Scotch Fusilier Guard, the Grenadier

Guards, the 16th Regiment of Infantry and a field battery of breechloaders. Certainly the Guard, as seen on parade, is worthy of all its fame. . . . Much of the fine appearance of the Guard depends upon its brilliant dress. Its uniform is the immense and ridiculous bearskin shako, the red coat, with white, pipe-clayed belts, and dark blue pantaloons—the dress formerly worn by the New York City Guard. Having seen them thus I should like to see them on a march in Virginia in June, with knapsacks and blankets, eight days' rations, and sixty rounds of cartridges, just to see what their double chins would look like."

The editor of the *Journal of the Household Brigade* of that year makes the pertinent remark that "our American friends may be quite sure that their enemies in Virginia would see more of their chins than their backs."

## CHAPTER XV

### SPOILS OF WAR

‘SOUVENIR’—it was the Army’s catchword during the War. It summarises the most ineradicable habit of our Army, if not of all armies, throughout its long history. On the battle-field, in billets, on the line of march, the British soldier has practised his hobby. His pack has bulged with enemy relics, shell-noses, hats—anything and everything to which his roving eye takes fancy. It is within the present writer’s knowledge that a saint’s face in stained glass travelled safely over the battle-fields for months in the flat top of a private soldier’s cap. In regimental possession or museums, the flotsam and jetsam of our wars remain to keep together the story of fame.

A great many articles which would be priceless to-day have been carelessly flung aside by unappreciative hands. A great many more have been lost through passing into private possession. Items that have been valued by their original owners have been rubbish in the eyes of their descendants. Only in recent years has a real effort been made to gather the relics of our wars into museums, and in this work the regiments

themselves, with their newly-awakened historical sense, are playing a great part.

Principal of all types of military trophies are enemy guns. Fiercely fought for, they are most often lost because, except under favourable conditions, or by the exercise of the most reckless heroism, they are comparatively immobile on the battlefield. In the old days they were almost invariably so. Even the light field guns were nearly always lost by a defeated army. Napoleon hardly saved a battery from Waterloo.

Of the thousands of enemy guns brought to England as the booty of wars without number, but few remain to-day. Eight brass cannon at Sandhurst, French guns from Waterloo, figured recently in the news, taking part in an 'end of term' rag at the Royal Military College. In some of our old London streets may still be seen old, discoloured hitching posts, set up at the kerb-edge, which once barked defiance at the 'thin red line.' The Achilles Statue in Hyde Park honouring the Iron Duke under his very windows is also witness to the bravery of the men he led. It is made entirely of captured French cannon. This was one of the common, and surely appropriate, uses of captured guns. Few people realise that the first issue of Victoria Crosses were stamped out of a Russian gun from Sebastopol. Many more guns, at all periods, have been taken into British use as soon as captured.

Woolwich, home of the Royal Artillery, is the



depository of many of our gun trophies. Guns at the Rotunda, the Royal Regiment's Museum, have come in from wars great and small—wars that decided the fate of Europe, forgotten campaigns that fixed this or that morsel into the jigsaw of Empire. Moreover, when, some years back, the Royal Artillery pageant formed the 'set-piece' at the Royal Tournament, from Woolwich for the Musical Drive came a complete battery of Royal Horse Artillery guns that spoke so truly at Waterloo.

For many years the old 54th Foot, now 2nd Bn. Dorsetshire Regiment, dragged on ceremonial parade a brass field gun. The 54th Foot distinguished itself in 1801 by the capture of the Marabout Fort at Alexandria. The gun was one of a pair taken at that place. In 1840 the gun ceased to appear on parade, and two years later the 54th was allowed to inscribe the word 'Marabout' beneath its Sphinx on clothing badges and colours. The Dorsetshire Regiment perpetuates the distinction, and the old gun remains in its dépôt, at Dorchester.

By an old custom of the Army captured bells were the perquisites of the Master-General of the Ordnance, presumably for casting into cannon. They were ruthlessly torn from their belfries in captured towns and sent home, the last considerable haul being those of Sebastopol. One bell remains in our Army to tell young soldiers the story of a victory gained in peace-time, the victory

gained by discipline over the dread element of the sea.

In January 1897 part of the 60th Rifles and a company of the York and Lancaster were *en route* from South Africa to Mauritius on the troopship "Warren Hastings." The vessel was wrecked at night off Réunion. In spite of great peril the discipline of the troops prevented loss of life. In memory whereof the ship's bell of the "Warren Hastings" gives nautical time each day to the home battalion of the King's Royal Rifles.

Napoleon taught our Army many things, and for years during, and especially after, the wars our authorities were busy remodelling the Army in many respects on French lines, though possibly their fancy was taken more by the form than the spirit. The reissue of cuirasses to the Household Cavalry, although not avowedly so, was probably prompted by the reputation of the Cuirassiers of the Empire. Yet at Waterloo the 'Gilets de fer' were well held by our infantry and overthrown by our own 'Heavies.' Literally hundreds of French cuirasses from the battlefield hang yet on the walls of the Tower of London. Mercer, that invaluable pen-painter of the campaign, sketches a true if homely scene of victory as he describes men squatting at the roadside after the fight, frying horse steaks over fires of broken lance shafts with French cuirasses as frying-pans.

The same officer acquired a French lance in the battle, which his orderly carried behind him

for years. On proceeding overseas he left the weapon at Woolwich, and it appears likely that this was the weapon taken as a pattern for the lances with which our converted Light Dragoons were armed. The conversions themselves were, of course, further tribute to our foes. The gallant officer was much distressed when, on return from his spell of foreign service, he was unable to find his trophy in the museum where it had been left.

Curious trophies some of them are. There is, in the United Services Museum, an old 'Jingling Johnny,' an odd affair of bells which used to be included in most military bands. This particular instrument is believed to be of Moorish origin, and to have been taken from them by the Spaniards. The French 88th captured it in the 1808-9 campaign, and affixed a brass eagle to its head. At Salamanca the Connaught Rangers, themselves the 88th Foot, took it in fair fight, and used it for many years on parade. At some period of its history the silver bells were stolen by a dishonest big drummer, and replaced by brass ones. During a stay of the regiment in India the 88th were disgusted to find that a native regiment with which they were in cantonments carried such an instrument. Whereupon the Connaughts laid their 'Jingling Johnny' by, refusing to share such a distinction with a 'Pandy' regiment.

In the Mess at St. James's you may see a snuff-box made from a hoof of Marengo, Napoleon's famous Arab charger. The Emperor brought the

horse from Egypt in 1801, and it carried him at Marengo, Austerlitz, Wagram, Jena, to Russia and at Waterloo. Brought to England after its master's flight, the animal lived for many years, until now its skeleton stands, sad relic, in the Museum in Whitehall.

On the anniversaries of the great Peninsular victories there is carried on parade by the sergeant-major of the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders, a curious bone stick. Inscribed on gold bands are the titles of the battles, while a plate on its head gives its history. In 1802 the 91st were on their way home from the Cape. A sword-fish attacked the vessel which carried the regiment, and, ramming the hull with its snout, was killed and captured. The sergeant-major, Andrew MacLaine, claimed the 'sword' as a trophy. It accompanied him through the Peninsular War and has been handed down since to successive sergeant-majors.

Some of our captured drums are described elsewhere in this volume, but there are many in various hands. Bugles and trumpets, too, are easily portable species of spoil. There is true romance in a Russian bugle, also in Whitehall, that was brought home from the Crimea. On the night of the attack of April 19th, 1855, a bugle shrilled out from the enemy rifle pit. Fifteen-year-old Drummer McGill, of the 77th 'Pothooks,' took up the challenge. Over the top he went, and with his bare hands grappled with the Russian bugler. He threw him, held him down till he

surrendered, and then returned quietly, holding his trophy, to his Colonel's side.

Two bugles there are preserved, not enemy spoil, but remembering in long mute copper two of our most famous cavalry actions. One, at the R.U.S.I., sent the ' Gallant Six Hundred ' of the Light Brigade hurtling on the Russians at Balaclava. It was sounded by Henry Joy, of the 17th Lancers, and subsequently presented to him by his officers.

The other is older, and owes its preservation almost to accident. It was in 1870 that Musician Edwards, of the 1st Life Guards, mentioned casually in barracks that his father still had in his possession the bugle on which he had sounded the charge of the Household Brigade at Waterloo. The old man, sixteen years of age at the time of the battle, had then been orderly trumpeter to Lord Edward Somerset, the Brigadier. After the return of the regiment to England a new pattern field bugle had been issued to the Cavalry, and Edwards asked and received permission to keep his old instrument. The veteran, interviewed by officers of the regiment, was unwilling to part with his trophy, but made a will bequeathing it to the officers of the 1st Life Guards. By them it is still preserved, together with the Waterloo medal of John Edwards.

Until they ceased to be carried in battle the fiercest fights of all have been waged round

colours and standards. To the eternal glory of our Army, England holds many more of these precious trophies than ever she has surrendered. Although many can no longer be traced, a fair number are still in existence.

Oldest of all remaining, and they are reduced by time to bare poles, are those of Blenheim. They hang in the Chapel of the Royal Hospital at Chelsea. At Ramillies, again, our Scots Greys captured the colours of the French Regiment du Roi.

Dettingen was a great battle for standards and colours. The spoils of our Army included six, a list of which has been preserved. One in particular is described as "A White Standard, embroidered with gold and silver; all stained with blood; the Launce broke; the Cornet killed without falling, being buckled behind to his horse, and his Standard buckled to him. This Standard belonged to the Mousquetaires Noirs, and was taken by a Sergeant of Lieutenant-General Hawley's, the right squadron of the whole Line."

One is reminded of a later incident of the battle of Fontenoy. Here it was that one of the standards of the Greys was carried by Cornet William Erskine, son of the colonel of the regiment. Before the action opened the colonel had the standard pole lashed to the boy's right leg, and sent him off with the command, "Go, and take care of this; let me not see you separate, for, if you return alive, you must produce this standard."

No British banner was lost at Dettingen, but the fights to preserve them were fierce. Ligonier's 7th Dragoon Guards, whose casualties were heavier than those of any other British cavalry regiment, were at one time completely surrounded. Cornet Richardson had a desperate fight for his charge, and came out of action with thirty wounds. After it was over, lying in his tent, the cornet remarked, "Sure, if the wood of the pole had not been of iron they'd have cut it to pieces." Which makes it almost unnecessary to remark that Richardson was an Irishman, out of Fermanagh. Ligonier's, in spite of their peril, brought off with them a pair of French copper kettle-drums.

Trooper Tom Brown, of Bland's Dragoons, now the 3rd King's Own Hussars, had an even more thrilling time. His regiment was fighting fiercely against nine French squadrons when he saw one of the three standards, already torn by bullet and sabre, lurch out of the hands of its wounded cornet. Brown swung out of the saddle to retrieve it, but received a sabre cut which sheared three fingers from his bridle hand. His terrified horse, loosed from the restraint of the mangled hand, ran away and bore the Yorkshireman clean through the enemy lines.

He at last regained control, and was riding back when he saw a French gendarme making off with the standard. He attacked and killed him, snatching the standard as it fell. Clamping the pole 'twixt knee and saddle he gripped sword

anew and cut his way back. Seven wounds he had in face and body, three bullets through his hat. There is a story that he was knighted on the field by King George II, but it is more certain that he returned to be landlord of the inn at Yarm, near his old home at Kirkleatham, Yorkshire. There would be thrilling tales of battles when the ale ran o' nights.

A number of French colours of the Republic and Empire stand either in the United Services Museum or at the Royal Hospital. Two are from Egypt and several more were taken in Corsica, when, in 1794, a British force captured the island in yet another campaign which is almost forgotten to-day. These early flags bear the devices and mottoes of the Revolution and are, in some cases, the old Royalist white flags on which the Tricolour has been superimposed.

Ordinary French colours are by no means to be confused with the famous and far more precious 'Eagles.' In the French Army regiments were actually brigades, all battalions of the one formation marching together. Each battalion had its own colours, but there was only one Eagle to a regiment, presented by the Emperor himself. These were less exposed to the shock of battle than the colours and even more fiercely guarded. With the exception of one taken in the West Indies, which no longer exists, only five French Eagles were taken by British troops, and these may all be seen at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.



Most unfortunate were Napoleon's 22nd and 62nd Regiments. At the battle of Salamanca each lost a colour (now in Whitehall) and one its Eagle as well, to the 44th Essex Regiment.

One other Eagle only fell to us in Spain, on March 5th, 1811, during the battle of Barrosa. It was taken by the 87th Prince of Wales's Irish, now the Royal Irish Fusiliers, under Major Gough. Belonging to the 8th Regiment of the French Line, its Eagle crest, in commemoration of an act of gallantry, was of gold, with a wreath of the same on its neck.

In 1852 a thief broke through a trap-door in the roof of the Chapel at the Royal Hospital and seized the trophy. Wrenching off the gold Eagle and banner, the thief threw away the staff. It has been replaced in its old position, with a replica of the Eagle crest.

Sergeant Bourgoyne of the Imperial Guard describes how fiercely the French Eagles were cared for. Even during the disastrous Moscow retreat, when the Grande Armée practically ceased to exist, the Eagles marched stolidly in the midst of their escorts, whose steadiness and devotion nothing could shake.

So, at Waterloo, complete debacle though it was, the utmost British valour could only wrest two Eagles from the foe. They came to England very proudly, with Wellington's Waterloo dispatch. Cheering London saw them flaunted one from each window of the coach in which they

were borne to the Prince Regent. Both stand at Chelsea, one in the Chapel, the other in the Great Hall.

The former is that of the 105th Regiment, and tells its own glory of Jena, Eylau, Eckmuhl, Essling and Wagram. It was taken by Captain Kennedy Clark of the 1st Royal Dragoons. The exploit which added the second, that of the 45th of the Line, to our spoil, is a truly gallant one. During the charge of the Heavy Brigades, Sergeant Charles Ewart of the Royal Scots Greys singled out the Eagle-bearer of the 45th and cut him down. A French lancer near by flung his lance like a javelin, but was sent hurtling from the saddle by the strong arm of the Scot. He had killed yet another foeman when Ponsonby, the Brigadier, sent him to the rear with his spoil, telling him that he had done enough. Well might Napoleon remark, "*Ces terribles chevaux gris. Comme ils travaillent.*"

We shall see, in a description of Albuhera, how the British colours were defended at that great fight. We have read how the men of Dettingen and Fontenoy fought for the safety of their banners. There are many more such stories well worth the telling. You may learn how, at Rousbach in 1794, Trooper Maneely fought off all comers from the standard of the 8th Royal Irish Dragoons, now Hussars. His horse shot, and himself several times wounded, his last conscious act was to scrabble a hole in the ground in which

he thrust his precious standard. Maneely was carried off captive, but his charge was retrieved by his comrades.

One colour only was lost during the Peninsular War, that of the 66th, at Albuhera, which now hangs in Les Invalides. The battalion's other colour, also taken when Colbourne's Brigade was almost destroyed, was recovered later in the day, but in such a state that a new pair was ordered to be sent from England for the 66th. In the meantime the remnants of the regiment were combined with those of the 31st into a Provisional Battalion, which carried the colours of the 31st, as senior regiment. Consequently the new pair were sent home again and, in 1814, despatched to Plymouth to meet the regiment on its return. They were unaccountably lost, and again replaced. Shortly afterwards they reappeared, and are still in existence.

Strangely enough, in view of the veneration in which they are held, this is not the only occasion on which colours have been lost. Colours of the 71st Highland Light Infantry, dated 1788, were discovered in 1921 in a Limerick pawnshop. Their adventures are entirely unknown. A blue silk standard, of George III's reign, bearing embroidered on it the Royal Arms of Britain, was recently recovered from a small shop in the south of France, where it was being sold as a chair cover. The 19th Hussars retrieved in 1885 a set of four guidons issued to the old 19th Light Dragoons in

1781, and carried by that regiment for twenty-five years. They were discovered in the hay-loft of a farm near Thurles and returned by the farm owner to the regiment.

Quatre Bras was a fierce battle for ensigns. Pack's Brigade of Royal Scots, 44th and 92nd Foot, was outflanked and fiercely assailed by Wattier's Lancer Brigade. The 44th (now 1st Bn. Essex Regiment), having no time to form square, faced about and reserved their fire. A grey-haired old French veteran rode straight at the colour party and drove his lance into Ensign Christie's eye. The boy, blinded with blood, but with one thought only in his mind, flung himself to the ground on top of his colour. The Lancer ripped away a large portion of the silk and was riding off, when he was bayoneted. In the centre of the Royal Scots the fight raged hottest round young Ensign Kennedy. Fast he clung to his colour pike. The silk hung in shreds: the boy was wounded. His grip tightened as he refused relief. Finally ensign and colour together were carried out of action, while a gallant foe withheld their fire in tribute.

Earlier in the day disaster had fallen upon the 2nd Bn. 69th Regiment, a battalion raised in 1803, and disbanded in 1816. Halkett's Fifth Brigade, greeted with a heavy discharge of artillery as it came on to the field, received the order to form square. Three squares were completed, those of the 30th, 33rd and 73rd. As the 69th were in

process of being formed, an officer of high rank, said to have been the Prince of Orange himself, rode up and remonstrated with the colonel, saying that the movement was unnecessary.

The regiment stood in a hollow, and its view was obscured by standing corn. While it remained uncertain and half-formed, the Cuirassiers came down upon it. With sure judgment the horsemen, avoiding the solid mass of the 33rd, rode in among the unfortunate 69th. Though the men fought well, and were to fight well again two days later, they were caught at a disadvantage, and in the confusion a Cuirassier of the 8th Regiment seized the King's Colour and made off with it.

The colour, instead of being taken to Paris, came into the possession of General Donzelot, and was lost sight of for many years. Then, in 1909, an officer of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, Captain Jeffcock, visiting France, came to the Château at Azay-le-Rideau, which had been turned into a museum under the curatorship of a descendant of Donzelot.

In the porter's lodge he was surprised to find, offered for sale, two colours, a British and a Dutch. He bought them, and found the one to be the missing colour of the 69th. Thus, after 94 years, the emblem, fiercely guarded and honourably taken, came home to England.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BATTLE

#### I. "THE UNSURPASSABLE SIX"

How better can we close than by giving these few battle pictures, chosen almost at random from the great picture gallery of British Gallantry? Up and down the glamorous walls we may see the bold paintings of honourable men—generals often sneered at, and accused of blundering—albeit generally to victory: here and there men whose names cannot be queried, even in the list of the world's leaders; captains and ensigns dying with a boy's smile on their lips; humble men from the plough's tail or the workman's booth, each and every one wedded to the great profession, glorying in the brotherhood that "binds the brave of all the world."

On August 1st each year six regiments of British Foot wear roses in their caps. On August 1st, 1759, as these same regiments marched out to give battle to the French, laughing privates reached out from their ranks and snatched roses from German briars, sticking them in their cocked hats and grenadier caps that they might carry the wild rose of old England to victory.

### *SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER*

The quarrel lay, roughly, between France, Spain, Russia and Austria on the one hand, Prussia and England on the other. Great Britain was at war, but by no means at bay, on four fronts. Our armies fought in America, India and Europe, our Navy wherever it could find French ships of war: 1759 was the year of Quebec, of Quiberon Bay, and of Minden. William Pitt had made good his boast of "calling England out of that enervate state in which twenty thousand men from France can shake her."

August 1st, 1759. The church clocks of Minden proclaimed the new day to two waiting armies. Camped south of the town were Contades and de Broglie with 70,000 Frenchmen. Six miles off across the blackness of Minden Heath, Ferdinand of Brunswick was afoot with an Allied force of 54,000 men in defence of Hanover.

Wild as was the night, it was matched by the manœuvrings of the opposing troops. The French floundered in darkness through the town at 1 a.m. Ferdinand had read the signs correctly, and decided, while it was yet light, that there would definitely be a French advance. He made his dispositions accordingly, and was to be warned of the slightest stir among the French advanced posts. Yet it was three hours before a belated messenger reached him with information.

Apart from a flanking force to the left at Todhausen, Ferdinand's force was organised in

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eight columns. The cavalry, as was usual at that time, composed both flanks, that on the right the twenty-four British squadrons of Lord George Sackville. "Mark the sad name of him," writes Carlyle. From the beginning his horse was in the utmost confusion.

There was an early morning mist, and the two armies were hardly in position by 8 a.m. The French line followed roughly the semicircle of the town walls. Ferdinand's advance, strongly supported by Waggenheim on the left, rested on the right on the security of the Bastau morass and stream.

It is Ferdinand's third column whose heroism has caused Minden to be a pride in our annals. It is the Balaclava of the British Foot. Nine battalions there were to this column, under a German general von Sporcke. Three of the nine were Hanoverians, the remainder British—the Unsurpassable Six—the Minden Boys. We have them all yet in our Army List. They were the 12th Foot (now the Suffolks), the 20th (now the Lancashire Fusiliers), the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, the 25th (now King's Own Scottish Borderers), the 37th (now 1st Bn. Hampshire) and the 51st (now 1st Bn. King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry).

Then, as now, they were plain regiments of the British Line. For sixpence a day, and most of that 'stoppages,' these men fought King George's battles. Their sergeants were moneyed men at



six shillings a week. Their junior officers would be at school to-day. Ill-fed, ridiculously dressed for war, they played havoc with the carefully laid plans of a formal eighteenth-century battle, and routed an army which was the pride of Europe.

Ferdinand of Brunswick was a general of no mean order, but poorly served by his subordinates. Sackville's cavalry, mutinous with shame and with a raging Marquis of Granby at its head, was not moved throughout the action. The story of Sackville's disgrace is best forgot. Excess of caution or sheer stupidity of Ferdinand's other generals was only counterbalanced by the punctilious parade movements of the opposing French.

With saving grace the British batteries of Foy and McBean were steadily pounding out the fame of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Hardly knowing where to turn, Ferdinand caught the bold flicker of red where von Sporcke's column was in the act of deploying for its battle formation. Here were troops who meant business, and a general who knew how to use them. A messenger spurred from Ferdinand's side. Von Sporcke's column, when it advanced, was to do so with drums beating. For this was the eighteenth century.

The order was either wrongly delivered or misunderstood. It was taken as a direct command to "advance with drums beating." Von Sporcke's first line, shaking itself into formation as it went, marched boldly out. A flight of

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aides dashed off to its head as Ferdinand realised the mistake, and the scarlet line halted under cover of a copse, while the second line hastened its deployment. They stood, 12th, 37th, and 23rd in first line, 20th, 51st, 25th and the Hanoverians in rear, overlapping on each flank.

Suddenly, to the general amazement, the British drums rolled anew. The first line stepped off as on parade, with the second, still only half-formed, struggling gamely after it. Alone and unsupported, swept by a cross fire from sixty cannon, the battalions swung proudly out at the massed Horse of the French centre.

Two hundred yards they marched, then Con-  
tades loosed his first eleven squadrons. The  
scarlet lines stood still, stolid and contemptuous  
as at Dettingen and Fontenoy. This was their  
trade. 'Lobster Backs,' men called them at  
home. Urchins cried after them in the streets,  
"Yah—sixpence a day to be shot at."

Out in the open boy officers quietly criticised the formation and checked the dressing. With their canes they tapped at long musket barrels out of true elevation, as the Horse came down. Then, at a range of ten paces, was poured in the volley which had made the British Foot feared over a continent.

Four new brigades of cavalry and thirty guns came from the French left. For a moment the first line wavered, then, closing their ranks, they loosed a fire which blasted the charging horsemen

from the field. Six cavalry charges they withstood. What cared they for Carabiniers or Gendarmerie de France? Infantry? Swiss Guards? Bring them on. In two hours the battle was won, and virtually by this column.

Foy and McBean urged sweating gunners to limber up for pursuit. Billows of German Horse swamped the retreating French.

And at the latter end my Lord George Sackville trotted quietly up and asked of Ferdinand what the repeated orders he had received for his cavalry might mean. "My Lord," remarked the Prince, "the opportunity is now passed." The British Horse, with bare-headed, bald-headed Granby at its head, had laurels to come. 'Emsdorff' and 'Warburg' and 'Wilhelmstahl' mark their charging valour.

Friend and foe alike bear witness to the honour the Foot had gained.

"I have seen," wrote the French Marshal, "what I never thought to be possible—a single line of infantry break through three lines of cavalry ranked in order of battle, and tumble them to ruin."

General Westphalen, Ferdinand's Chief of Staff, wrote exultingly, "Never were so many boots and saddles seen on a battle-field as opposite the English and the Hanoverian Guards."

They had paid, those battalions. The Hanoverians, with no reflection on their prowess, had occupied the lesser exposed flank. Out of 4434

red-coats that marched, there were lost in killed and wounded 78 officers and 1252 men. The severest losses were sustained by Napier's (12th) and Kingsley's (20th), the right flank regiment of each line.

Note these extracts from General Orders.

"Minden, August 2nd, 1759. Kingsley's Regiment of the British Line, from its severe loss, will cease to do duty."

"Minden, August 4th, 1759. Kingsley's Regiment, at its own request, will resume its portion of duty on the line."

So they wear roses, the Minden Boys, on August 1st. They troop their colours with the proud gold of 'MINDEN': they run races, they dance, they sup the ale on which the Minden Boys fought.

The 20th even preserve their 'Minden Yell.' It was heard again at Inkerman, "to the consternation of the Russians, who had never before heard such an awful noise." These things regiments remember down the centuries, for thus are regiments made.

## II. "THAT ASTONISHING INFANTRY"

The scene is Spain. The 'toast—"To the immortal memory of those who fought and fell at Albuhera." A dozen colours shine more bravely because of that word.

As dawn broke on May 16th, 1811, Beresford,

General of England, Marshal of Portugal, found himself, and the trusting men of his command, very frankly in a hole. Numerically superior to Soult's twenty-three thousand veterans who faced him, he guessed rightly that his Spanish allies would leave but seven thousand red-coats on whom he might rely. True, he had been reinforced during the night, but Soult treated his faulty dispositions with contempt.

As the watery sun of Albuhera dawned the Irishman saw what his opponent had realised overnight. The key position was not the ridge in front where the Albuhera stream gave false security, but the hill on the right, which turned his flank and threatened his communications. There was, furthermore, a secondary height facing the first across the river, under cover of which were massed 15,000 men and thirty guns within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing.

In the morning light the light horse of Spain made half-hearted effort to force the river passages. They were easily held, too easily, so that Beresford saw his error. Galloping staff officers failed to move the Spaniard, Blake, to the new and true front, and the arrival of an exasperated Beresford in person, while it started the change of front to the threatened flank, raised tumult. One British regiment, the 29th, was almost swept away by its retiring allies. Two Spanish battalions stood firm throughout. They

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were the Regimento de Irlando, formed long ago from our James II's last army.

Ere the French were fairly in position the leading brigade of Stewart's 2nd Division moved off to counter them. Buffs, 31st East Surrey, 2/48th Northamptonshire, 66th Royal Berks, marched in column through a driving mist of rain. As they breasted the rise the French Horse swirled down—Lancers of the Vistula, Hussars and Dragoons. Two-thirds of the Brigade went down. Six guns and two colours were lost. Only one battalion had time even to form square.

Beresford, in the thick of it, was set upon by a Polish Lancer. The General was a very Samson. Parrying the lance, he allowed his sword to swing loose from his wrist. He grasped his opponent by the throat, wrenched him from the saddle, and flung him beneath his horse's feet, to be finished off by his orderly. The situation was restored at the gallop by four squadrons of Lumley's cavalry. The Brigade tramped on.

Back on the old front things were worse. Spanish cavalry fled, Spanish infantry, fallen from their old estate, fired more on friend than foe. Beresford, everywhere at once, rode to the head of one regiment, seized an ensign by the breast, and bore him and his colour to the front by main force, without effect on the regiment behind.

Mist gave Stewart a chance to post the 31st, at least, firmly on the height, and ride back to where

Hoghton, with his brigade of 29th Worcestershire, 1/48th and 57th Middlesex, still kept the old front. A man for command was Stewart. Out of the rain-squall he dashed, with a cheery yell, "Now is the time. Let us give three cheers."

Hoghton, the Brigadier, gave a hand wave over his shoulder. His servant, cool as in camp, stepped forward and helped him from green frock-coat into full-dress. The 'Old Red Rag' has a noble tradition. The Brigade topped the hill and formed line, the 29th hardly heeding a flank charge of the Lancer squadrons.

Not a shot was fired until the dressing was exact. Men fought neatly in those days. Inglis, commanding the 57th, felt his horse drop beneath him, but remained on his feet and completed the dressing.

All England knows the picture of the 57th at Albuhera—the unwavering red line, the knot of boy drummers—"Steady the Drums and Fifes." There is a copy in every room at the Middlesex Depôt. Small-arm fire, hail of grape at half-range, point of cold steel—they withstood all for hours. Inglis fell wounded, a grape-shot in his neck.

"Die hard, Fifty-seventh, die hard," he cried from the ground. They died, "lying as they fought, in ranks, and every wound was in front." Of 570 of all ranks who went into action, over 400 fell. Inglis lived, and with him the tradition that has inspired a noble regiment.

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"Die-hards, remember Albuhera," came the call at Inkerman, and the 57th stood firm.

A second-lieutenant in France, 1915, winning as he died the proud Cross, cried once more, "Men, we can only die once; if we have to die, let us die like Die-hards."

Help was at hand for the men of Albuhera. Twenty miles away the drums of Myers' Brigade had overnight beat 7th Royal Fusiliers (two battalions) and 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers to arms, and with them Harvey's Portuguese Brigade. Londoner, Welshman and Portuguese—Wellington's 'Little Fighting-cocks'—marched through the darkness and the rain till the Spanish sun broke through. They stood ready at last in the rear. Tired eyes peered through the battle smoke as they stood, resting on their muskets. A well-known figure was missing.

"Where's Arthur?" asked a plaintive Cockney voice.

"I don't know—I don't see him."

"Aw—wish 'e were here."

Beresford hesitated. He had sent Alten, in command on the old front, orders to evacuate bridge and village. He prepared to cover his communications. Well might he hesitate. His men were shattered, all but the Fusiliers. Surely he must retreat rather than risk his last reserve in battle. Hardinge, his staff officer, pleaded.

"You have," he said, "a peerage on one hand and a court-martial on the other."



"I will try for the peerage," exclaimed the Marshal. Hardinge galloped off, and Myers brightened at his order.

"It will be," he cried, "a proud day for the Fusiliers." It was, though Myers, a brigadier at twenty-one, never lived to see its close.

As the Fusiliers marched up, Stewart's stricken brigades prepared to support. Even the Diehards' sad remnants stiffened anew. It was too much.

"Stop them," cried Beresford, "Stop the Fifty-seventh. It would be a sin to let them go."

No one can speak better of the Fusiliers than Napier. "Then was seen with what strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult, by tone and gesture, animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardest veterans, extricating themselves from the crowded columns, sacrifice their lives for the mass to open out. . . . Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. Their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the heads of every formation. Eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnants of six thousand unconquerable British infantry, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."

Remember the fights for the colours. The Ensigns of the Buffs, Thomas and Walsh, were boys of fifteen and sixteen. Thomas lost his colour with his life in the first advance. A

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sergeant of the 7th Royal Fusiliers regained it later. Walsh fell stunned, but Lieutenant Lathom sprang to seize his charge before it could reach the ground. Half his face was shorn away, his left arm was severed by a sabre, his body pierced by lances. His last conscious act was to wrench the flag from its pike and wrap it round his waist. He lived for many years to wear the gold medal given him by his brother officers.

Vance, of the 29th, had served his King for seven short months. His regimental colour was found tucked between his dead body and his tunic. Ensign Bevis Hall of the 23rd was waving his flag in triumph, like the glorious boy he was, when a musket ball took him between the eyes. In the Die-hards the King's Colour had its staff smashed and seventeen holes in the silk. The Regimental Colour bore twenty-one shot-holes when the day was done. Its bearer, Ensign Jackson, had nine bullet-holes through his clothes and four wounds. One solitary colour went to France.

Soult paid a left-handed tribute which the Army remembers with a chuckle.

"There is no beating these fellows. I always said they were bad soldiers, and now I am sure of it; for I turned their flank and penetrated their centre; they were completely beat and the day was mine. Yet they would not run."

### III. A HEAVY-WEIGHT AT WATERLOO

“Old Shaw the Life Guardsman,” wrote Dickens, in *Bleak House*, “why, he’s the model of the whole British Army in himself. Ladies and gentlemen, I’d give a fifty-pound note to be such a figure of a man.” Nor was Dickens the only notable writer to extol the famous fighting man. Macaulay, in his own somewhat pompous style, makes the bold assertion that Shaw did more to win the battle of Waterloo than the Iron Duke himself.

“Model of the whole British Army in himself.” No bad note to finish on. Let us hear more of this “Old Shaw,” the memory of whose deeds should never grow dim.

John Shaw was born in 1789. Of sound yeoman stock, his father was William Shaw of Colchurch, Rugeley, who married Anne, daughter of John Dean of Hutton Wandesley, Yorks. The pair migrated to Grange Farm at Wollaton, Notts, where their son was born.

John seems to have been early cock of the local walk. It is related that, at the age of sixteen, he ‘threw in his hat’ to the village bully, a man with a three-stone advantage of the lad. Shaw stood up to his man, but was not doing too well, when a stranger at the ring-side, putting a hand on his shoulder, remarked quietly, “You’ll beat the big man yet, boy.” Shaw went in and won. The stranger knew a boxer when he saw one. His name was Jem Belcher.

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The youngster was in no mind to follow the plough. He had two avowed ambitions in life: to fight all comers in the prize-ring, and the King's enemies wherever they might be found. Scope there was for both when, in 1807, he came south and joined the 2nd Life Guards. The 2nd was then a 'boxing regiment,' and the recruit rapidly found his level. His colonel, Barton, noted Corinthian, took his training seriously in hand. He was introduced to the Fives Court, where such masters of the ring as Crapley and Barclay of Ury eliminated from his tactics all the over-enthusiastic faults of the amateur.

Shaw was essentially the heavy-weight. The record of his height varies most disconcertingly from 6' 0½" to 6' 4". He is said to have weighed in for his last fight at fifteen stone. Such a weight, although sufficient to make an inspector of cavalry blench, was by no means uncommon in the Household Cavalry of the day. For the rest, he was fair-complexioned, grey-eyed, light-haired, and round of visage; remarkably large-limbed and of great muscular strength.

There was quite a good 'side line,' it appears, for the Household Cavalrymen of the early nineteenth century. They were in great demand as artists' models. Shaw's physique made him especially sought after, and he sat at the Royal Academy schools to such men as Haydon, Etty, Landseer and Hilton.

The *Military Magazine* takes early note of him.

## SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER

“He is very scientific, and adopts the course of retreating and hitting, so successfully practised by Cribb. He may be a bad in-fighter, but he is a long left-handed hitter.” John Shaw was making a stir, and towards the end of 1811 attracted the attention of Molyneaux, the great negro boxer, from whom he received a challenge couched in terms typical of the age.

“To the Milling Lifeguardsman.

“As my late unsuccessful combat has set the knowing ones afloat to find another big man to mill me, and having just got flash enough to know some part of the phrases, by which I understand that you are the man I am next to contend with, I hereby challenge to fight you for 300 guineas and as much more as your friends think proper, any time between now and Christmas: after which I hope to be otherwise engaged. I send this challenge to you, but I will fight any other man in the world, barring Cribb, on the same terms, within the stated time.

“The Fearless Thos: Molyneaux.”

Shaw's Commanding Officer refused to let him enter the ring at that time, but he is believed to have relented later, so that his man met and defeated the great black.

At all events, the *Military Magazine* again, in the following year describes a “desperate battle between Shaw the Lifeguardsman and Burrow at Coombe Wood. Thirteen rounds in seventeen

minutes. The Guardsman by Fives Court sparring has become quite a scientific man: he fights with great temperance, not to say jollity. He beat his fourteen-stone man in thirteen rounds, till he could not see his way out of the ring."

From fight to fight he went in such fashion that he became the idol of sport-loving London. The populace claimed him as their own, while his later deeds were to make England ring with his fame. On a play-bill of 1843 Mr. Powell set forth the attractions of the 'Circus Royal' he was about to present at Fair Fields, Stepney. He himself, "first horseman of the day" (his own advertisement), promised to appear in "his favourite part of Shaw the Lifeguardsman."

Shaw's last match took place on Hounslow Heath on April 8th, 1815, when he stood challenger to all England. The opponent selected was one Painter, a man from Manchester. In half-an-hour the soldier beat his man out of the ring, giving terrific punishment—including ten knock-out blows in quick succession—without himself giving sign that he had felt a tap. It is but fair to Painter to state that he had but that morning been released from the Fleet Prison, where his training must have been restricted.

Immediately after the contest Shaw, recognised as the virtual heavy-weight champion, was approached with the offer of a new fight for a 100-guinea purse. But greater game was afoot. Napoleon was free from Elba. The swords of

Europe were at the grindstone. They were days when men were not ashamed to proclaim their patriotism.

“ I should have been proud,” announced Shaw, “ to have entered the lists against him : but I find I am to be called upon shortly by my King and Country. I hope, Sir, you will hear that I fought nobly ; and, if I die, I consider it an honour to fall in their cause. However, if I am well, I will meet him on my return.” There was a further offer to purchase his discharge, but this, like the other, was declined.

The 2nd Life Guards, in the Waterloo campaign, formed part of Lord Edward Somerset’s First or Household Cavalry Brigade. The three numerically weak Household Cavalry regiments were strengthened by the addition of the 1st King’s Dragoon Guards. With his regiment to Flanders went Shaw, Corporal John Shaw by now. Through the early summer days the horsemen lounged in billets along the banks of the Dender. Little stirred but the Hussar picquets who ranged the frontier, watching for the Imperial Eagles of France. In mid-June they came winging.

On the 16th came the clash, Napoleon meeting—and soundly drubbing—Blucher at Ligny, Ney thrusting at Wellington’s advanced posts at Quatre Bras. Retirement would have been inevitable from the Prussian defeat, even had Wellington intended to fight here. The Cavalry

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surged out to cover the retirement of Picton's infantry. Obeying one of Napoleon's own maxims, they "rode for the sound of the guns." Scampering continental militiamen who would rather have fought for Napoleon, cried that all was lost. Grim Scots and English, nursing their wounds at the roadside, cursed but cheered on the hastening horse. As they rode the troopers slashed their nose-bags to lighten their horses' loads.

The retirement was regularised on the 17th, back through Genappes to the ground that was Wellington's own choice. At Genappes it was that the 1st Life Guards, headed by Major Kelly, were ordered forward in place of a Light Dragoon Regiment that showed some disinclination for the job of facing the French Lancers. Pell-mell through the village swept the men of the Household, hurling all before them. Worthily did the regiment sport laurels on its standards for many years on June 17th.

The night before Waterloo was wet. Of the two armies the French were the worse off, the men having, for a reason unexplained, been forbidden to light fires. Day followed dully. Although the rain stopped and the sun filtered through, there was no strength in its rays until evening. Horses stood in many places hock-deep in mud. Two armies glared across fields of trampled corn. At 11 a.m. Napoleon's Grand Battery crashed the overture.



Immediately behind the Allied Centre stood the two Heavy Brigades of British cavalry. The 2nd or Union Brigade under Ponsonby held 1st Royals, 2nd Scots Greys and 6th Inniskillings. Below the rise they stood, the crests of their helmets alone visible to an oncoming foe.

Corporal John Shaw was away on a foraging party when the battle opened, but was swiftly back when the guns roared. His place was in the centre of the left squadron, the regiment itself forming on the left flank of the Brigade.

The Heavies sat steady until two o'clock, when Napoleon, foiled at Hougoumont, sent D'Erlon's might crashing into the Allied Centre. Disaster was near. La Haye Sainte, desperately defended, was cut off: at one point but one square remained. Dying Picton ordered it to stand fast. Needless words to such men as the Gordons. After D'Erlon's infantry, Kellerman's Cuirassiers were pounding across the valley.

Lord Uxbridge, Wellington's cavalry leader, had been given carte blanche in his handling of the arm. His time was come. With a hasty message to Ponsonby to loose the Union Brigade, he placed himself at the head of the Household Brigade. The regiments moved by column of threes to clear the infantry on their front. Wellington spared them a parting word.

"Now, gentlemen," he cried, "for the honour of the Household Brigade."

The line formed. Young John Edwards, a

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boy of sixteen, trumpeter that day to Somerset, shrilled out the 'Charge.' They were away. Seven glorious regiments swept over the ridge.

The 2nd Life Guards rode to their left front, crossed the great road and rounded La Haye Sainte to the eastward. The forces met like two walls. British swords rang on French cuirasses (to use the Brigadier's own words) as "the hammering of so many tinkers at work."

Swords longer by three inches than the British pattern gave Kellerman's men the advantage. Our men drove their horses like wedges into the enemy ranks and overcame the handicap at close quarters, seeking out with the point the bare throats and cuirass openings, or crashing their hilts into the foemen's faces.

On the level ground by the farm-house Shaw's first opponent awaited him at the halt. The Frenchman's sword thrust strongly below the boxer's belt. He parried, and a moment later his blade bit into the enemy's helmet and clave his head to the chin. An eye-witness declared that the face "dropped off like a bit of apple." A little later two of his comrades, Dakin and Hodgson, saw him ride at a French standard-bearer. Again he got his man, but the swirl of battle carried the precious trophy out of his reach. The French broke, and struggled back to the higher ground, the British at their heels. Shaw, it is stated by Siborne, cut down nine men in this charge alone.

In the pursuit the ground was irregular and the brigades sadly out of hand. Small parties fought on, through the very Grand Battery itself, to the waggon lines where Napoleon's boy conscripts sat their teams, tears running down their cheeks.

Here it was that Shaw joined up with Major Kelly and a small party of the 1st Life Guards. The Brigade was riding back now. Seeing their plight the Emperor sent two fresh cavalry brigades to intercept them. Kelly and Shaw, with bold decision, rode straight at the ranks, cutting right and left, and literally hacked their way to freedom.

Vandeleur's light cavalry rode to meet the Heavies, and a "Thank you, Life Guards" from the grim Duke as they rode in, has been recorded among their proudest tributes. Wellington was a silent man in battle. The Heavies had done great work. Two weak brigades had so roughly handled an army corps that only half a brigade retained its formation. They had sadly mauled a cavalry division and permanently disabled fifteen guns.

Blown as they were, the brigades were called upon constantly during the afternoon. One Hanoverian battalion that fought nobly owed its very existence to the men of the Household.

The climax came in the late afternoon, when Ney, gathering thirty-seven fresh squadrons from the Cavalry Reserve, charged at the head of

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eighty squadrons. Four horses were killed under him. "Perspiring, his eyes aflame, foaming at the mouth, with tunic unbuttoned and one epaulette shorn away," Napoleon's "Bravest of the Brave" was at last vanquished.

As the French retired and the last of the Heavies dashed in final pursuit, Shaw was still in his place. Once again he reached his old arena by La Haye Sainte. Beset by ten furious foemen, he brought the odds down to five before his sword snapped short. Flinging the hilt in one man's face, he snatched the heavy helmet from his head and laid on with that as a flail. At last the angry blades hacked him from the saddle, and he was left for dead. Victor Hugo relates that a drummer boy pistolled him as he lay.

He was not quite finished. Dragging himself along painfully, he reached the farm of La Belle Alliance. There in the yard, "cut to pieces and scarcely able to move," he was found by a comrade, wounded also, who had been dragged thus far a prisoner, and released by the retiring French.

"My dear fellow," muttered Shaw, "I am done for," and spoke no more.

Outside the farm grim Wellington grasped old Blucher's hand. Not a stone's throw away fifty files answered roll-call out of nineteen hundred sabres that had in the morning been the Heavy Cavalry Brigades of Britain. In the courtyard, lying on a dunghill, Corporal John Shaw, the

*SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER*

‘Milling Lifeguardsman,’ quietly bled to death  
from over thirty wounds.

Gold thread on crimson damask, history told  
with the smile of gallant men,—why should not  
the Army be proud? Marlborough, Wellington,  
Kitchener, Haig—Juana Smith and Mrs. O’Grady  
—Corporal John Shaw and Private Thomas  
Atkins—following after them, have we not the  
right

“To count the life of battle good,  
And dear the land that gave us birth;  
And dearer yet the brotherhood  
That binds the brave of all the earth”?



*War time reminiscences  
of a German Naval Intelligence Officer*

# THE DARK INVADER

*Captain von Rintelen*

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